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The value of outdoor education for people with disabilities: An in-depth case study of the Calvert Trust

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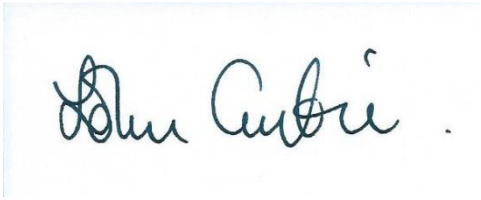
Declaration

I declare that:

1. this thesis has been composed by myself;
2. that the work is my own; and
3. that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.



24 April 2014

John P.G. Crosbie Date

Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis has taken considerably longer than originally planned and I recognise that this has tested the patience of a number of people closely associated with the work. It would not have been possible to complete this thesis without their assistance or the support of the many other people who have contributed to the process in different ways. There are too many to name individually but the most obvious I wish to acknowledge here and trust others are happy to be recognised by context rather than by name.

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Abstract

The United Kingdom has a long history of using outdoor activities as a vehicle for recreation, rehabilitation and education for people with disabilities. However, there has been little empirical research into the value placed on the experiences by those who organise the activities or by the participants.

The Calvert Trust was one of the first organisations to specialise in outdoor activities for this population and through their three Centres is currently the largest provider of outdoor education for people with disabilities within the UK. Through four separate but linked research phases covering data collected between 2002 and 2013, the present study investigates the value of Calvert Trust programmes for both organisers and participants.

The first phase involved the analysis of an existing data-set of post-course evaluation questionnaires (n=502) completed by visiting leaders of groups of participants (n=2,843) with a variety of disabilities who had attended one of the three Calvert Trust Centres. The activities and factors contributing to the perceived benefits of participation were identified, and visiting leader evaluations were compared with the internal reports on the same courses and participant groups completed by Centre instructors (n=702). There were differences in aims for the visits dependent on the sector of the respondent (education, recreation or rehabilitation) but an increase in confidence and independence were those most frequently reported outcomes across sectors. There was general agreement between visiting leaders and instructors as to the role of challenge, achievement and teamwork in delivering these benefits.

The limitations of having respondents from only one Centre were addressed in the second phase of the research. This investigated post-course evaluation questionnaires from all three Centres returned both by visiting leaders (n=397) and participants (n=2,507). Comparisons were made across the Centres and differences were found to exist in the aims and domestic aspects of the provision reported on by the visiting leaders but not in aspects

of the activity delivery. The participants, however, showed small but significant differences across the Centres in their reporting of development of communication skills, social skills, self-esteem and independence.

A third research phase employed iterative email interviews with representatives from visiting organisations (n=17) and the Calvert Trust (n=17) to relate participant experiences to the aims of both the purchasers and providers. Both sets of informants saw participant recognition of personal ability as a key aim of the visit. Other frequently reported aims were to provide new social opportunities, develop interpersonal skills and increase confidence, but these had different relative weightings across informants.

In the fourth phase of the research the direct voices of the participants on the value of their outdoor experiences was accessed through interviews with participants (n=23) and with a 'significant other' (n=18). Differences in the reporting of personal experiences were noted between those with physical and intellectual disabilities. A number of those with physical disabilities, and/or their 'significant others', considered that the outdoor education experience had made an important difference to the participant's life that might have a long-lasting impact. Those with intellectual disabilities reported a positive experience that may have given them the confidence to take part in similar events, undertake more exercise or widen their social circle. A post-visit increase in independence was reported by a number of the 'significant others' for this latter group.

The findings overall suggest that participation in the outdoor education courses at the Calvert Trust was generally a very positive experience, with outcomes valued by purchasers, by participants and by those with close knowledge of them. The principal reported benefits relate to themes of confidence, independence and realisation of personal ability. These are discussed in relation to the specific outdoor education programmes experienced and the impact that these may have on the everyday lives of participants with disabilities.

Chapter 1

Introduction and background to the research

1.1 Introduction

Through my long-term involvement in managing, fundraising and marketing outdoor education for people with disabilities, I have become aware of the growing demand from those who fund these experiences for evidence to justify their financial investment. There are a great deal of anecdotal reports from practitioners working with people with disabilities as to the benefits of outdoor education programmes and I too have witnessed positive changes in many participants. However, there has been little or no research within the UK to verify that there are indeed beneficial outcomes from outdoor education for people with disabilities, and the research conducted elsewhere has been in very different contexts. When the opportunity arose to undertake a study to establish whether or not there was any value to outdoor education for this population, I was enthusiastic to further my own understanding of the issues and to apply my experience within a more objective research context in the hope that my findings might be of benefit to people with disabilities and to outdoor education providers working in this field.

This introductory chapter provides the background to the research reported in this thesis. It outlines the reasons the research was conducted and the involvement of the interested parties. It identifies what outdoor education was taken to mean in the context of this thesis and provides a historical background of outdoor education and the ways it has been used within the framework of the research. As the research was a case study, the background of this ‘case’ is explained and the position of the author as researcher located within this context in order to understand the influence the researcher may have had on the research, its outcomes and the interpretation of the results.

1.2 Background to the research

The Calvert Trust is one of many outdoor education providers in the United Kingdom but one of only a few that specialises in outdoor education for people with disabilities. The three Calvert Trust Centres and their combined throughput make the Calvert Trust the largest provider of outdoor education for people with disabilities in the UK. Although the Centres do not work exclusively with people with disabilities, this is their prime focus and their explicit *raison d'être.* Further information about the Calvert Trust and its organisation is provided in Section 1.5 of this chapter, below.

Some key trustees in the Calvert Trust had a keen interest in evaluating the work of the charity and in gathering evidence in support of the benefits disabled people are generally considered to obtain through participation in adventurous outdoor activities. As Centre Director I was often challenged by Trustees to pinpoint those areas of greatest benefit, the value of specific activities, the ideal length of a course, and whether or not multiple visits provided stepping stones to greater achievements or just repeated the experience but with little further development. The Trustees had little hard evidence to support their opinions on the benefits of outdoor education or to inform their operational decisions. In publicity material, anecdotes were used to highlight the benefits of the work of the organisation, but these had no clear links to any supporting research evidence or to any underpinning theories of how outdoor education 'works'. The Calvert Trust website (Calvert Trust, 2011 visitor benefits section) suggested that any interested parties should speak to participants as "a short conversation with one of our many visitors is usually proof of the benefits to be gained".

The Calvert Trust's motive for funding this research was to increase understanding in the field of outdoor education for people with disabilities with a view to better enabling the charity to fulfil its mission. This included identifying any evidence which might encourage more people with disabilities to participate in outdoor programmes and which could also be used in

support of fundraising. In addition, it was anticipated that the findings could guide the organisation in developing or improving areas of its service so as to be of greatest possible benefit to participants with disabilities. Even if the research concluded that the organisation made little or no difference to the lives of disabled people, there was an acceptance that the research was beneficial in itself. Such a finding would provide an opportunity for the Charity to review its work and refocus its efforts to enable it to make a greater impact within this sector of society (J. Fryer-Spedding, 2006, personal communication).

The main focus of the research to be reported here was to assess the value of the outdoor education experienced at the three Calvert Trust Centres for people with disabilities. Hence the primary research respondents were the disabled people themselves along with their accompanying supporters or leaders. The Calvert Trust, as the provider of the experiences, must also be regarded as a subject of this research as it is effectively an in-depth case study of its work.

This PhD was sponsored by the Calvert Trust, so not only was the Calvert Trust the subject of the research but it was also the sponsor of it. The funds for sponsoring the research were obtained from a grant made by Zurich Community Trust. Zurich Community Trust is an internal charity of Zurich Financial Services that is funded through employee giving which was matched by corporate donations from Zurich Financial Services. Zurich Community Trust had been a supporter of the Calvert Trust for a number of years through the funding of a bursary scheme. Between 2001 and 2011 this bursary scheme supported over 1,700 participants with disabilities making a visit to a Calvert Trust Centre. As part of the grant conditions, Zurich Community Trust required feedback on the effectiveness of the bursary scheme and on the impact that attending the Calvert Trust had had on participants' lives. The Calvert Trust had difficulties in providing this feedback to a depth that entirely satisfied Zurich Community Trust's needs, hence it

may be seen that Zurich Community Trust also had an interest in the findings of the research.

With both the sponsor and the funder having an interest in the research findings, there was the potential for a conflict of interests to exist that might influence the research outcomes. This conflict can only be reconciled by considering the principles behind the commissioning of the research. Rather than seeking findings that justified their current efforts, both the Calvert Trust and Zurich Community Trust were more interested in the greater benefit to society through knowing what value outdoor education has for disabled people. Through this knowledge both organisations either planned to concentrate their resources into the ongoing provision, or refocus their work. Neither body expressed an interest in establishing positive benefits and the involvement of an independent research institution, the University of Edinburgh, ensured that an appropriate level of rigour would be applied to the research methods to be used as well as in the interpretation of the data gathered.

1.3 What is outdoor education?

Before going further it will be of value to establish the meaning of the term outdoor education as used in this research, to understand where this concept has originated from and the current purposes for which outdoor education is used.

1.3.1 Definition and scope of outdoor education

There has been a plethora of terms applied to the use of the outdoors and adventurous outdoor activities to provide some form of benefit to the participants. Many of these terms have overlapping meanings, or cover overlapping areas of work. Some terms have a very precise meaning to the practitioners in a specific field, but may be understood as something quite different by other practitioners, even those working in closely related fields.

Some of the variations have origins that stem from the cultural differences of the particular nationalities using the outdoors to serve a wider purpose.

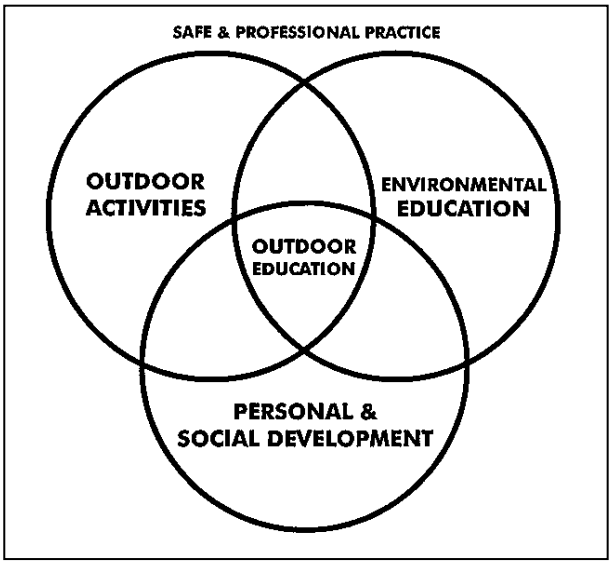
Early writers such as Donaldson & Donaldson (1958) had a narrow view of the term 'education' seeing this as formal education and hence their definition as "Outdoor Education is **education** *in, about* and *for* the outdoors" (p.63). Many involved in statutory education provision continued to use the term with this meaning, using phrases such as *educational objectives* and *curriculum expansion* (Hunt, 1989; Smith, Carlson, Donaldson, & Masters, 1972). On the other hand, the National Association for Outdoor Education (NAOE) on their formation in 1970 (quoted in Ogilvie, n.d.[1]) defined outdoor education as "a means of approaching educational objectives through guided, direct experience of the outdoors, using as learning material the resources of rural and coastal environments". This approach has shortcomings as it does not identify which educational objectives may be met, how the environments may be used or the nature of any activities involved.

Drasdo (1972, p. 9), in his seminal text, used the term "outdoor pursuits field" and recognised that a wider range of outcomes could be delivered though outdoor activities and these included character building, aesthetic appreciation, field studies and activities for leisure. The Department for Education and Science (DES, 1975, p. 1) at their Dartington Conference defined outdoor education as "those activities concerned with living, moving and learning in the outdoors".

P.J. Higgins and Nicol (2002, p. 11) show outdoor education as the area of overlap between three interlocking circles consisting of *outdoor activities*, *environmental education* and *personal and social development* (see Figure 1.1*)*.

[1] n.d. implies that no publication date is available.

Figure 1.1: Higgins and Nicol three circle model of outdoor education



Source: Higgins & Nicol, 2002, p. 11

Drasdo (1972, p. 5) would no doubt have been critical of this approach as he stated that

> … it is no more possible to cover both [outdoor pursuits and environmental studies] at the highest level simultaneously than to make careful observations on the migration of birds whilst playing a game of football. The more we do of one, the less we do of the other.

Higgins and Nicol recognise that there is no requirement to have an equal emphasis on all three areas all of the time, and that "a good outdoor educator may well be focusing attention or one or other of these at any given time" (p.11), although they state that it is essential to remain aware of all three. The validity of this model is also challenged by providers who use indoor or urban environments to deliver their 'outdoor education' programmes. The Higgins and Nicol (2002) model also raises questions as to the definition of an *outdoor activity,* if this is an essential component of outdoor education, as it is possible for programmes to be working in the outdoor education field which do not utilise traditional outdoor activities, for example when gathering field work data or utilise inside problem solving activities. Conversely, the requirement to involve all three elements challenges the use of the term "outdoor education" by providers who do not feature all three in their

programmes, for example higher level personal development type courses which often ignore the environmental education element in their work.

G. Cooper (1998, p. 36) sees outdoor education as multi-faceted and suggests a broader definition that includes all of outdoor pursuits, field studies, development training, outdoor recreation and environmental education. This contrasts the idea that outdoor education is the overlap between diverse fields. Cooper sees the term encompassing a variety of approaches (p.21) but he also emphasises the importance of differentiating between outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and outdoor education (p.42).

Aylward (2005, p. 5) believes there is

> … a huge gulf between outdoor recreation and outdoor education. At one end of the spectrum are activities which are just for fun. At the other extreme is psychotherapy. Our different branches of Adventure based work lie along that line.

Although there are obvious differences between outdoor recreation and outdoor education, that this gulf is huge is challenged. In practice, and as demonstrated in the Higgins and Nicol (2002) model, there can be areas of considerable overlap. In addition, although psychotherapy may be the opposite end of the continuum from ‘fun’ for psychotherapists, the opposite end of the continuum to ‘fun’ would differ for environmentalist, management trainers or others factions who also use the outdoors as part of their work.

Outdoor education has featured in the formal curriculum in various guises. Initially in the 1970s it was to “complement learning planned by the school” (DES, 1979, p. 8), then in the 1980s became part of the PE curriculum as both a subject and in examinations (Department for Education, 2011) and then the 1990s it was used in support of Personal, Social and Health Education (HMI, 1989). More recently it has been used to deliver the Department for Education (2004) Every Child Matters agenda (as witnessed in the pre-visit discussion forms between teachers and the programme manager at the Lake District Calvert Trust) and to deliver the Scottish

"Curriculum for Excellence" (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2010). In contrast to earlier educators, the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel do not mention *education* in their description of the outdoor education field, instead referring to "activities and experiences that: normally take place in the outdoors; frequently have an adventurous component; generally involve physical activity; and always respect the natural environment" (Outdoor Education Advisors Panel, 2005, p.2) so it must be deduced that these advisors continue to regard outdoor education as an approach to learning rather than having a curriculum associated with the subject.

There has been a trend to replace the 'education' label in favour of 'learning'. Examples include the National Association for Outdoor Education changing name to the Institute for Outdoor Learning in 2001 on the grounds that it would promote greater affiliation from within the whole of the outdoor sector by distancing the term from more formal education, as well as emphasising the benefit to the participant (Ogilvie, n.d.). More recently the use of the term "outdoor learning" has been used in UK governments initiatives on "learning outside the classroom" (Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), 2008), in Education Scotland's (2011) publication titled "Outdoor Learning" and has been used in Beames, Higgins, & Nicol (2012) book supporting learning outside the classroom.

Over the past few years, in addition to the traditional areas of focus above, outdoor education has been seen to encompass or contribute to addressing a number of issues in modern society. These include nature-deficit disorder (Louv, 2005), the management of personal risk (Gill, 2007), health and well-being (Newton, 2007) spirituality and a sense of place (M. Parker & Stiehl, 2010).

For the purpose of this study, although the identities of the discrete disciplines within the field are recognised, the term outdoor education will be taken in its widest possible form and may be seen to cover the whole of the three areas of outdoor activities, environmental education and personal and

social development (if the latter takes place in an outdoor setting), as in reality outdoor education is attempts to achieve a large variety of differing aims. Thus for this thesis I shall define outdoor education as:

> The use of the natural environment or adventurous outdoor activities as a medium to gain greater benefit than that of pure recreational enjoyment.

As this research is a case-study into a particular organisation, it must be noted that the Calvert Trust provides only residential programmes for its targeted beneficiaries and that residential provision has the potential to deliver additional benefits in terms of the type of challenge and the personal and social development that might be unachievable in a non-residential setting (Barrett & Greenaway, 1996; R. Williams, 2012). In the context of this research and its outcomes, the value of outdoor education may also imply the benefits of residential experiences associated to these activities.

1.3.2 Historical background to outdoor education

Prouty, Pannicucci, & Collinson (2007, p. 64) consider that the "present day benefits of adventure are best understood in their historical context". Therefore a brief overview of the philosophical background to outdoor education is provided to help place the modern use of outdoor education into perspective within contemporary Western culture.

The philosophical basis of outdoor adventure education can be traced back to the ancient Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato (Hunt, 1999). Aristotle believed that virtues such as wisdom, bravery, temperance, and justice were important for young people to develop and the best way to obtain these virtues was through experience of contexts demanding such virtues. Plato also believed that optimal learning came from a student directly experiencing the subject matter. The 19th century philosopher William James considered that the virtues taught in war were of great value. He developed a "moral" alternative to learning through war by placing young people in adventurous situations and, using nature as the medium, they would develop these virtues without the abhorrent acts associated with war (Hunt, 1999; Prouty, et al.,

2007). In the early 20th century the educational philosopher Dewey (1938) likewise identified the importance of experience in formal education and called for all education to be real and about life itself rather than a mere preparation for life. Experiences were seen as a tool for learning and not just as an adventure in themselves. It was these philosophies that led Kurt Hahn to develop this concept of experiential learning further and put them into practice through outdoor education with his programmes at Salem School in Germany, Gordonstoun School in Scotland and the Outward Bound movement (Hahn 1960). The application of these ancient ideas in a modern setting has influenced many later outdoor education programmes, as well as experiential education in general and has become an underpinning principle of outdoor education.

1.3.3 The purpose of outdoor education

An understanding of the range of possible uses which outdoor education has been put to in recent times will provide a stage on which outdoor education for people with disabilities may be set.

As with the definition of outdoor education, some writers have been concerned that the concept of outdoor education has not had a clear purpose but has been used as “merely an umbrella for a host of fragmented and unconnected approaches” (Slee quoted in T. Parker & Meldrum, 1973, p. 20). Slee’s own vision of outdoor education was to create “a fundamental understanding of the environment together with skills which will allow free movement and independence in the environment” (ibid.). These too may be seen as fragmented with the only connection being the common environment in which they all take place, which itself does not create a justification for a defined subject area.

K. Hahn (1960) identified the need for young people to develop enterprising curiosity, undefeatable spirit, tenacity in pursuit, readiness for self-denial and above all, compassion. This became described as ‘character building’, a term used by both Drasdo (1972), who also included field studies and aesthethic

appreciation amongst the prime purposes for outdoor education, and by T. Parker and Meldrum (1973), who added leisure pursuits and community living.

The Dartington conference (DES, 1975) utilised Mortlock's (1973, p. 9) three areas of development as the stated aims of outdoor education being

> heightening awareness and respect for:
> ***Self*** – through the meeting of challenge;
> ***Others*** – through group experiences and the sharing of decisions; [and]
> ***The natural environment*** – through direct experience.

These recognised the contribution that outdoor education could make to the personal development, interpersonal skills and environmental awareness of participants, and all three elements that have remained within the core purpose of outdoor education.

The earlier term 'character building' has morphed into 'personal development' following criticism of the former as a construct which research identified as having a lack of modifiability through interventions (Brookes, 2003a; M. Freeman, 2011; Roberts, White, & Parker, 1974). Personal and social development is now often quoted as the primary purpose of outdoor education (Barrett & Greenaway, 1996; Department for Children Schools and Families, 2007; Outdoor Education Advisors Panel, 2005). The Department for Children Schools and Families publication added 'well-being' as a purpose while the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel stressed the importance of relating an outdoor experience back to the everyday lives of participants for any value to be gained, as without this there would be little purpose in any such a standalone activity.

Beames, et al.'s (2012, p.1) recent rationale for learning outside the classroom restates many of the earlier justifications of outdoor education including bringing the curricula alive, encouraging physical activity and understanding of both the environment and sustainable development. These authors also note the health and well-being benefits and recognise the

potential for children to learn to evaluate and manage risks. They state that "outdoor learning has the potential to integrate these vital areas of a young person's formal and informal schooling" (p.2).

From the above it may be concluded that although different descriptors have been used as the field has evolved and specific terms have fallen in and out of fashion, there is with some variations and a few exceptions, a consensus that the purpose of outdoor education revolves around the personal development of those involved. In addition there are the benefits of increasing participants' awareness of the natural environment, sense of place, sustainable development, health and recreation and through these, greater links have been made to the more formal educational curriculum.

1.4 Terminology used in charity evaluations

To ensure clarity in meaning of the terms used in this thesis, a brief description of the definitions used in evaluations by the Charity Evaluation Service (2012) and followed in this thesis are provided here.

Inputs refer to the resources put into an activity carried out by an organisation. Inputs may be human, material, financial or time. In outdoor education these may be interpreted as including the participant themselves, the aims and objectives of the visit, the physical and social environment in which activities take place as well as the staff and infrastructure that enables the delivery of adventurous outdoor activities and the residential setting.

Outputs usually refer to the activities, services and products provided by an organisation. These are usually easily defined and measured. In outdoor education they would be typified by the number of participants or number of sessions run, possibly undertaking specific activities.

Outcomes describe the changes, benefits, learning or other effects that happen as a result of the services and activities provided by an organisation. For outdoor learning Rickinson et. al (2004) have categorised these into

cognitive, affective, social or interpersonal and physical or behavioural changes in the participant.

Impact is the wider change to the individual or society that results from the outputs. It is often long-term, broad and is invariably difficult to measure or evaluate. In outdoor education it goes beyond the benefits obtained by participants at the time of taking part to the difference that participation will make to their lives specifically or to society generally.

Stakeholders are those people who have an interest in the activities of an organisation. This includes staff, volunteers, users and their carers, trustees, funders, purchasers, donors, supporters and members.

Fuller definitions of the above are provided in the glossary at Appendix A.1.1 for ease of reference.

1.5 A situational description of the Calvert Trust

As has been discussed above, the Calvert Trust must be seen in part as the subject of this research as this organisation provided the particular outdoor education experienced by the research subjects and thus the research is inherently a case study of the organisation. A case study involves the study of the particular case and the specific case needs to be identified and explained in order for it to be understood (Yin, 1994). Any explanation must draw upon the nature of the case, its historical background, physical setting as well as any other relevant contexts such as the economical, political and legal contexts that apply (Stake, 2000). To fulfil these requirements, a situational description of the Calvert Trust is provided below.

1.5.1 The context for creating a specialist outdoor centre

Although there is a long history of the use of the outdoors for educational and personal development purposes (Ogilvie, 2013), the modern concept of residential outdoor centres originates from the start of the 20th century. The Newlands Valley Centre near Keswick claims to be the first outdoor centre,

opening in 1905 (Newlands Centre, 2010), but the establishment of the Outward Bound organisation in Aberdovey in 1941 is often seen, both in the UK and beyond, as a major milestone in the use of the outdoors for personal development (Outward Bound, 2004). The high reputation of the work of Outward Bound not only established their name as the industry leader in the provision of residential outdoor education but also caused them to become the proprietary eponym for this type of work.

Following on from the success of Outward Bound, the benefits of challenging activities in the natural environment were perceived to be so great that educationalists came to believe outdoor experiences were an important part of a young person's education (Ogilvie, 2013; T. Parker & Meldrum, 1973). Derbyshire opened the first Local Education Authority (LEA/LA) Outdoor Centre at White Hall in 1951 and this was followed by many other LEAs establishing a similar provision for their pupils during the fifties and sixties. These were either 'in county' or in a remote and contrasting area to the 'home environment' (Ogilvie, 2013). Private companies began to capitalise on the positive image and popularity of adventurous outdoor activities with organisations such as Peter Gordon Lawrence's company 'PGL' entering the market in 1957 (PGL, 2010), offering outdoor activities for recreational use from a centre environment. By the seventies, the "outdoor industry was booming" (DES, 1979, p. 77) and the benefits to those privileged enough to attend courses were being contrasted to those who were denied this experience through lack of opportunity, financial constraints or disability. The climate appears to have been conducive for the third sector of not-for-profit and charitable organisations to fill this gap in provision (Ogilvie, 2013 p.528).

Three outdoor centres opened in 1978 with the specific objective of addressing the needs of disabled people. Churchtown Farm provided a field studies and outdoor activities centre to extend the work of the Spastics Society into this field (C. Davis, 2002); Bendrigg Lodge began working with a spectrum of disadvantaged people in the outdoors (Adams, 2010); and the Calvert Trust, although having been formed in 1974, also opened its first

Centre in the Lake District that same year with the stated purpose to “enrich the lives of people with disabilities by providing access to the countryside and the sense of adventure gained through partaking in outdoor activities” (Calvert Trust, n.d., n.p.).

1.5.2 Development of the Calvert Trust

The Calvert Trust was the inspiration of two Cumbrian landowners (John Fryer-Spedding and Viscountess Eleanor Rochdale), both of whom had personal connections with disabled people. They realised that although the National Parks were supposedly “for all people, for all time” (Harold McMillan, 1951, quoted in Calvert Trust, 1999) people with disabilities did not have the same opportunity as non-disabled people to enjoy the National Parks or the activities the countryside had to offer due to the lack of accessible facilities. This realisation led to the formation of the first Calvert Trust Centre, with the intention of addressing this issue on a local scale. John Fryer-Spedding donated two of his estate’s farmsteads to the new organisation in order to make this concept a reality and in 1974 the Calvert Trust was formed (Calvert Trust, 1999).

The name “Calvert” was chosen to recognise aspects of the relationship between Raisley Calvert and William Wordsworth that were embodied in the Charity’s values. The Calvert family were previous owners of “Old Windebrowe”, one of the donated farmsteads and Wordsworth was a one-time tenant of Raisley Calvert in that property. Calvert had grown up with Wordsworth, but at the age of twenty-one Calvert had developed tuberculosis and was dying. The friendship and support of Wordsworth was important to Calvert during this period. In recognition of this, and to enable Wordsworth to fulfil his writing potential, Calvert left Wordsworth a legacy that allowed him to dedicate his life to poetry. The name ‘Calvert’ therefore represents the mutual support that is possible between disabled and non-disabled people, as well as the desire to help everyone fulfil his or her potential. These values formed the basis of the Calvert Trust philosophy (Calvert Trust, 1999).

The Calvert Trust started as a small, local charity which opened with “a warden, an instructor, a sailing dinghy, a horse and a Land-Rover pick-up” (Calvert Trust, 1999 p.3). The Trustees appointed an educationalist as the Head of Centre and, as a result of this, schools and colleges were targeted as the main customer market, with the intention of delivering those educational goals that might be achieved through the outdoors and were currently being delivered by LEA outdoor education centres. A second target market was ‘organised groups’ such as youth organisations, hospitals and rehabilitation charities. The majority of these organisations had clear stated objectives and the Calvert Trust strove to deliver those it could through its chosen medium of outdoor activities. A third target market was organisations with more of a recreational focus, either as holiday charities who were looking for more adventurous recreational options (e.g. Winged Fellowship, Guide Dogs for the Blind Association); or residential homes and day centres wishing to provide recreational opportunities for their clients (P. Lingard, Centre Director, Lake District Calvert Trust, personal communication[2]).

The success of the project inspired the Trustees to promote the opening of a second centre to provide similar opportunities mainly for families with disabled members rather than for organised groups. In 1984 the Calvert Trust opened their second centre in Kielder Forest, adjoining and in partnership with the pre-existing Northumberland LEA outdoor education centre. Participation in the activities here would be for recreational rather than educational purposes. Nonetheless, in providing the opportunities to undertake activities that many considered beyond their capabilities, the Trust aimed to demonstrate what an individual could achieve with appropriate support or equipment, thereby expanding the horizons of those involved and

[2] ‘Personal communication’ references relate to discussions that took place during the researcher’s period of employment with the Lake District Calvert Trust 1991 – 2008 and maybe undated due to uncertainty of when the conversation occurred. Where possible, the reported contents of these personal communications have been confirmed with the cited individual.

helping the participants to 'better fulfil their potential'. However, the partnership arrangements with the LEA had difficulties as the different client groups (school children on structured educational courses and families on holiday) had different needs and expectations with respect to various aspects of provision, for example the standards of the accommodation and ancillary services such as catering (J. Fryer-Spedding, founder trustee, Calvert Trust, personal communication). The closure of the LEA Centre in 1991 provided the opportunity for the Calvert Trust in Kielder to take over the site. Recreation for disabled people became the preferred 'product' yet the Calvert Trust Centre retained a number of education courses for school groups as a legacy from the LEA centre. To help fulfil the demands of families in this recreational market, 10 self-catering chalets were built and a respite care[3] service offered to visitors and their families (P. Cockerill, Centre Director, Calvert Trust Kielder, personal communication).

With two Centres in the North of England, and only a limited number of visitors travelling from the South of the country, there was the perceived need for a third Centre to be located in 'the South' and the Exmoor Calvert Trust Centre opened in 1996. This Centre was intended to cater for both the personal development and educational market for organised groups, as well as the recreational market for families and individuals (M. Wagemakers, Centre Director, Calvert Trust Exmoor, personal communication).

With the establishment of a third Centre, the Calvert Trust organisation had become large enough to justify a level of national co-ordination and joint working across the Centres. In 1994, the Calvert Trust Council was set up as a consultative body for sharing information across the three Centres, generating economies of scale through joint purchasing, providing long-term

[3] Respite care is the provision of personal care to allow an individual's regular carer to have a break from that care provision, especially when this is a member of that person's immediate family.

strategic direction and generating a more powerful presence for lobbying or fundraising purposes (Calvert Trust, 1999).

As part of the strategic planning role, the creation of future Calvert Trust centres came under the remit of the 'Council'. Given the combination of the large numbers of disabled people in and around the London conurbation, and the travelling distances to the existing Centres, the founding of a Centre in the South-East was added to the Council agenda (Calvert Trust, 2001). This has yet to be established.

Since its inception, the Calvert Trust has pioneered both the involvement of people with disabilities in outdoor activities and the development of adaptive equipment to assist with their participation. Many of these techniques and pieces of equipment have subsequently become standard for people with disabilities particularly in the outdoor activities.

1.5.3 The mission of the Calvert Trust

The current Calvert Trust mission was established in 2001 and is:

> To enable people with disabilities, together with their families and friends, to achieve their potential through the challenge of outdoor adventure in the countryside. (Calvert Trust, 2001)

A supplementary paragraph states that they aim to achieve this by providing:

> a wide range of adventurous outdoor activities offering meaningful challenge and adventure
>
> skilled and caring staff who are aware of and able to fulfil the needs of their visitors
>
> accommodation appropriate to the needs of the participants
>
> facilities for families and friends to share the experience and enjoyment

The organisation addresses the whole of this supplementary paragraph through the infrastructure of the three outdoor Centres located in, or adjacent to, National Parks (Lake District, Kielder Forest and Exmoor). Each Centre

has been adapted to allow people with disabilities to access all of the facilities and has been made comfortable enough to encourage utilisation by families on holiday as well as for group-based work. The Centres offer a diverse range of adventurous activities (see Section 1.5.5 below). The staff have been selected for their empathy towards people with disabilities and trained to meet the requirements of the visitors.

The facilities provide the supportive context needed to deliver the outdoor experiences through which a participant might work towards the core mission of 'achieving their potential'. However, the mission does not identify how those outdoor experiences could or should be used to deliver this intended outcome. This was the subject of numerous debates between 1998 and 2000 amongst the Centre Directors and Trustees in an attempt to present a single cohesive philosophy for the organisation which would assist with public relations, marketing and fundraising (Calvert Trust, 1998-2000). Unfortunately, no agreement could be reached and eventually the Council decided that each Centre would be allowed to follow a philosophy driven by their own market sector and agreed by their individual board of Trustees (Calvert Trust, 2001).

Further supplementary paragraphs linked to the mission (Calvert Trust, 2001) identify the benefits of participation in the activities as:

> the enrichment in the life of each individual through adventure and personal achievement
>
> the chance to enjoy countryside of exceptional natural beauty
>
> recreational opportunities that can be transferred into everyday living
>
> personal development and rehabilitation leading to integration

The nature of these benefits has been further expanded on the web site (Calvert Trust, 2011 Visitor benefits section) which states:

> By focusing on challenging disability through outdoor adventure, a visit to the Calvert Trust is not just about fun, it's about developing personal skills that can be taken into everyday life, including:
>
> - building self-confidence
> - gaining independence
> - making new friends
> - acquiring new hobbies and skills

And also:

> Each visit provides the opportunity to try something new in a safe and caring environment. By pushing these boundaries with the support of our instructors, visitors feel more comfortable about trying new things at home.

From the above it may be seen that the Calvert Trust views the benefits it delivers as:

> the enrichment of an individual's life;
>
> enhancing personal development (in particular the building of self confidence, which in turn might lead to trying new things and greater integration or inclusion in everyday life);
>
> improving social skills and making new friends;
>
> providing new recreational activities at an individual and group level; and
>
> fostering an aesthetic appreciation of the outdoors.

1.5.4 Organisation of the Calvert Trust

The 'Calvert Trust' is not a single charity, but is made up of a group of ten interlinked charities all operating in the field of disability and outdoor activities. Each of the operating Centres was established as an independent charity and the Calvert Trust Council also is a separate charity. All three of the operating Centres runs, or had previously run, a separate charity for its riding activities under the auspices of the Riding for the Disabled Association. The three operating Centres were also supported by a local fundraising body

of ‘Friends of the (local) Calvert Trust’ operating within the auspices of the host Centre charity but were also charities in their own right (Fryer-Spedding, 2006).

This model of working offered a number of advantages to the organisation. Each Centre as a ‘local charity’ generated support from its local community who provided financial and managerial assistance. Being an independent charity enabled the individual Centres to approach funding bodies as a separate entity, thus making possible multiple applications to a single funding source which would otherwise have been denied a single large charity. In addition, in the event of insolvency of any one Centre, as independent legal entities this provided financial protection for the remaining charities (Fryer-Spedding, 2006).

The formation of the Calvert Trust Council brought the charities operating the Centres closer together under the one umbrella organisation. However, the Council had no executive powers over the Centres and the only authority that could be exercised was through the use of the brand name “Calvert Trust” (Calvert Trust, 2001). As a result, each Centre continued to retain its independence as a separate charity with its own board of local trustees who were solely responsible for the charity to which they belonged.

Due to the legal structure described above, each Centre was responsible for its own finances, but the internal business operating model was common across all Centres. The basis of this model was to ensure the long-term financial viability of the Trust’s contribution within this sector, irrespective of varying economic and charitable-giving climates. A large majority of the charitable funds raised across all of the Calvert Trust charities had been donated by Grant Making Trusts. Although there have been changes during the first decade of the 21st century (P. Boggon, Lake District Calvert Trust consultant fundraiser, 2006, personal communication), during the latter years of the 20th century these institutions would invariably only support capital projects, with the provision of revenue funding only to ‘pump-prime’ projects

and then only for a limited period. Thus to make the operating Centres financially sustainable, fund-raising was needed to raise capital for establishing the Centres and for subsequent capital projects. The Centres themselves were tasked to 'break-even' on their operating account, that is, to raise sufficient fee income from the delivery of the services offered to pay for their operating costs. Grant Making Trusts and other donors who were prepared to support bursary funding were approached for contributions to offset the charges for those participants who could not afford to pay the full tariff price. Apart from the capital costs and the bursary funding, the Calvert Trust Centres were therefore in all other respects businesses. Market opportunities were sought to generate the income required to cover the costs of operation, with appropriate tariffs being set and facilities being developed to appeal to the chosen market sector. This 'commercial' business model led to an atmosphere of competitiveness between the Centres and on more than one occasion, two or more Centres found themselves inadvertently undercutting each other in an attempt to secure business.

A combination of the initial thinking behind the setting up of the individual Centres (Calvert Trust, 1999), the business model underpinning the operations of each of the Centres, the Centre's chosen target market and the appointment of Centre Directors to deliver these strategic decisions has caused the three Centres to develop distinct but overlapping clientele along with a corresponding divergent approach to the outdoor activities that they provide (P. Lingard, P. Cockerill, M. Wagemakers, Calvert Trust Centre Directors, personal communications).

1.5.5 The Centres

The above section has described the Calvert Trust organisation, but not the Centres that deliver the outdoor experiences. This section aims to create an understanding of the culture and the demographics of the individual Centres in order to help put participant's experiences at each of these Centres into better context.

The *Exmoor Centre*, with 56 beds has the smallest number of beds and is the youngest of the three centres (although it has now been open since 1996). It stands in an elevated situation on Exmoor just outside the National Park. There are views over the surrounding hills and down to the nearby reservoir (where the water activities take place). The accommodation is in a converted quadrangle of outbuildings, set on a 40 acre site that once formed a Victorian model farm. All the accommodation and public rooms open onto a single enclosed courtyard with separate buildings containing the swimming pool, stables and climbing wall. All the activities offered are almost exclusively on-site with the most distant being on the reservoir, which is a 5-minute walk away through the grounds.

Activities for participants are structured within a set programme, with booking units (families, schools etc) staying together as a group for the activities. Groups move between activities but the majority of the instructional staff are skilled in a restricted range of activities or specialised in one field and as a result only work with a group for specific activity sessions. Thus, at *Exmoor*, there is a cohesive 'group' of participants but no continuity of Centre instructors working with that group. The evening programme is social in nature and on courses of five days or over, visitors are not programmed for activities on one day to enable them to explore the local area by themselves.

The customer base of this Centre is southern England and although used by many groups, the Centre always had the air of a country house hotel with aspirations to achieve this standard (Calvert Trust publicity video, 2001). Between 2000 and 2006 this Centre serviced a major contract to a provider of care for the elderly, and following this experience the Centre established an expertise in working with this sector of the population. The consequence of this is a high percentage of clients from this older age group in their participant profile.

The *Lake District Centre* is in the heart of the Lake District National Park, overlooking a large lake and the mountains beyond. The Centre operates on

a split site. The main site is on approximately 2 acres with 45 beds, a pool, a climbing wall and offices contained within the farmstead with all the original farm buildings having been converted to the bedrooms and the ancillary facilities. The site is adjacent to a main road and has no other land than that on which the buildings stand. Four miles away, the second site contains riding stables, three self-catering cottages (with a total of 26 beds) and an indoor sports hall used as an archery range. At the commencement of this study, activities were not offered to visitors in these self-catering units, but only to those utilising the accommodation in the main Centre. This policy was changing as the study progressed. Although there is a climbing wall on the main site, climbing takes place in the natural environment whenever possible and the swimming pool is only used by course participants in the evenings. This places the majority of activities in the “real outdoors” (as opposed to the Centre grounds), a feature that is appreciated by the Centre’s customers (Adventure Activities Associates, 2010, p. 4).

All activities are organised through a tightly structured programme designed in partnership with the visiting staff. This is intended to assist the Centre to deliver the customer’s desired outcomes. Unique to this Calvert Trust Centre, an instructor is allocated to each activity group for the duration of their stay. This ensures that the intended outcomes are known to the instructors leading the group and is reflected the Centre’s belief that the greatest benefit is achieved through knowledge of the participants and the selection of the most appropriate activity to achieve their aims. In the Lake District Centre therefore, there is both continuity within the group and a continuity of staff. This continuity of instructional staff is seen as “a key motivation in repeat booking” (Adventure Activities Associates, 2010, p. 4).

The customer base for this Centre is predominantly from the North-West of England, followed by the adjacent regions of the North-East, Scotland, Yorkshire and the Midlands. Although taking a number of families and individuals during school holiday periods, the Centre regards itself as providing a similar offering to Local Authority outdoor education centres and

hence markets itself to schools and organised groups for whom the courses and accommodation are specifically designed to cater. The large school usage accounts for the predominance of participants who are under 18.

The *Kielder Centre* is the largest of the Calvert Trust Centres and is situated in Kielder Forest on an extensive site surrounded by trees and with immediate access to the forest tracks and walks. The Centre is purpose built, with only a few rooms in the original farm buildings that it adjoined. There are 10 self-contained wooden chalets that surround the main building and these comprise the majority of the accommodation (60 beds). The remaining visitors are accommodated in the main building (32 beds) or if a full personal care service is required, in the Respite Care wing (13 beds). The activities generally take place on-site with the exception of the water activities which are a few minutes' drive away on Kielder Water.

The activities on offer generally do not form part of a structured programme. Instead individuals sign up to their chosen activity on a daily or half-daily basis, if they wish to take part at all. Thus the participants for any activity session may be made up of people from different families, organisations or chalets. In comparison to the *Exmoor* and *Lake District* Centres, this maximises the opportunity for the individual to exercise choice and to interact with other participants and staff, but in contrast to the other Centres there is a lack of continuity either within the group undertaking the activities or with the instructional staff leading them. When working with schools, pupils are kept together as a group for the activities but there is no continuity of instructors.

This Centre has a very strong connection with the North-East, particularly Newcastle, and this is the area from which nearly half of its customers came. The other well represented areas are Scotland and, in contrast to the findings that travel distances to outdoor centres by disabled participants is limited to between three and four hours (Adventure Activities Associates, 2010), nearly a fifth of customers came from the South-East which is well outside these travel times. This is the only Centre to offer respite care, whereby the Centre

employs carers to take full responsibility for the needs of an individual thus enabling families or other carers to have a break from their responsibilities. The combination of the recreational focus of the client base, the chalets in the grounds, the hub of the main building, the on-site activity offering and the recreational delivery style of the activities themselves, provides the overall feel of a campus based holiday centre, such as Center Parcs.

All three Centres offer opportunities for sailing, canoeing, climbing, cycling, walking, archery, challenge-course activities, orienteering, and swimming with individual centres extending this range of activities to include horse-riding, motor-boating, fishing, driving in electrically powered vehicles, land-yachting and paragliding (Calvert Trust, 2005, 2011). Table 1.1 lists the activities available at each of the three Centres.

Table 1.1: Main Activities offered by the three Calvert Trust centres

Exmoor	Lake District	Kielder
Climbing	Climbing	Climbing
Abseiling	Abseiling	Abseiling
Sailing	Sailing	Sailing
Canoeing	Canoeing	Canoeing
Challenge course	Challenge course	Challenge course
Orienteering	Orienteering	Orienteering
Archery	Archery	Archery
Cycling	Cycling	Cycling
Swimming	Swimming	Swimming
Big swing	Big swing	Big swing
Zip wire	Hill walking	Zip wire
Horse riding	Horse riding	Geocaching
Carriage driving	Carriage driving	Clay pigeon shooting
Bush craft	Caving	Golf buggies
	Problem solving	Velcro Olympics
	Ghyll scrambling	
	Paragliding	
	Land yachting	
	Camping	

Source: Calvert Trust web site, 2012.

Table 1.2 summarises the size, occupancy rates, staffing and visitor profiles in terms of their home location, disability and age, of the three Calvert Trust Centres. It is based on data provided for management purposes in 2010.

Table 1.2: Size, occupancy and visitor profile of the three Centres

	Exmoor	Lake District	Kielder	Totals
Number of beds	**56**	**70**	**105**	**231**
Visitor nights	**12335**	**14838**	**19970**	**47143**
Visitors	**3302**	**3809**	**5143**	**12254**
Activity Delivery Staff	16	19	22	*57*
Volunteer Instructors	0	6	0	*6*
Volunteers Leading Horses	6	70	0	*76*
GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION (% visitors)				
Abroad	0	0	1	0
National Organisation	10	1	4	4
Scotland	0	9	12	8
Wales	1	1	0	1
Ireland	0	1	3	1
NW	1	42	6	16
NE	1	8	48	23
Midlands	30	15	1	13
SE	28	7	19	18
SW	29	1	0	8
Yorkshire	0	15	6	7
DISABILITY (% visitors)				
Learning/Mental Health	51	50	46	49
Physical Disability	33	42	29	35
Sensory Disability	7	5	3	5
Multiple Disability	9	3	22	12
TOTAL with Disability	**1824**	**2454**	**2632**	**6910**
Non Disabled	1479	1352	2511	5352
Non Disabled (%)	45	41	49	44
AGE (% visitors)				
Under 18	24	39	17	26
18-25	11	17	6	11
25-65	53	42	73	58
Over 65	12	2	4	6

Source: Calvert Trust management data, 2010.

As can be seen, these figures relate to nearly seven thousand people with disabilities and these people undertook an estimated twenty-five thousand activity days. It can also be seen that there is a high concentration of visitors to each Centre from their surrounding regions. However, there are exceptions, with for instance a very low take up of provision by people from Wales, despite areas of high population being within relatively comfortable travelling distance, and a relatively large customer base from the South-East for both the Kielder and Exmoor Centres, despite this area being outside the travel distance identified by Adventure Activities Associates (2010).

Also from Table 1.2 a notable variation can be seen across the Centres of occupancy by 'National Organisations, (organisations that work across the whole of the UK without a specific geographical location for participants). Following conversations with staff at the Centres, it was established that those who coded the data were not provided with a precise definition for this category, which resulted in different interpretations and this may have influenced the results.

With respect to the disability profile Table 1.2 also highlights both similarities and differences across Centres. Approximately half of occupancy at all three Centres in 2010 was by people with intellectual impairments. The Lake District Centre had more users with physical disabilities and the Kielder Centre had notably more users with *multiple disabilities*. The lack of a precise definition for *multiple disabilities* and the resultant variations in interpretation for this category across Centres may have affected these profiles, but also the respite care service at Kielder inevitably attracted more people with multiple disabilities. With respect to overall age spread, the figures in Table 1.2 reflect the work the Lake District Centre undertakes with schools and the Exmoor centre work with older people.

1.6 Locating the researcher within this research

Constructivist epistemology highlights the fact that the researcher must play a part in the construction of any research findings as they will influence the focus of the research and craft any research tools from their own ontological position (Schwandt, 2000). Hence the role and perspective of the researcher must be understood when interpreting any findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The following is intended to locate myself as the researcher, in both the Calvert Trust and in the research to be reported in this thesis.

I was employed by the Calvert Trust in the Lake District Centre between 1991 and 2008. I started work as the Deputy Head of Centre and was appointed as the Centre Director of the Lake District Calvert Trust in 1993, a role I maintained until my departure. I had trained as a teacher specialising in outdoor education and had worked in local education authority outdoor education centres, charitable trusts focusing on personal development, and in the private sector delivering outdoor education courses for schools as well as outdoor activity skills courses for recreational purposes. During this time I had been involved with including children with disabilities into mainstream provision and had worked closely with a number of individuals with disabilities, enabling them to participate in skiing and canoeing at a high level. I had discussed at length what inclusion in mainstream services had meant to some participants and had seen the changes that the opportunity to take part in sport had made to the lives of others. My experiences had fostered an underlying belief in the value of outdoor activities as a vehicle for personal development and environmental appreciation. Even the skills acquisition courses I had run for recreational purposes, I considered to contain an element of personal development as these often furthered a long-term engagement by the individual both with the activity and with the outdoor environment in which it occurred.

On joining the Calvert Trust, I initially found the approach to the outdoor activities somewhat surprising and even a little unsettling. Although the

organisation's intentions were clearly focussed on personal development and environmental appreciation (Calvert Trust, 1991 see Section 1.5.3 above), the style of delivery was rather different to how these outcomes were normally delivered. The activities were approached as being for recreational purposes only and being evaluated by the staff solely by the short-term pleasure they provided. The enjoyment of, and engagement with, the activity appeared simply to cease at the end of each session. Reviewing what had been achieved with participants was not included as a part of any session or on completion of the visit. In addition, there was little attention being paid to the natural environment, either in terms of appreciation of it, or concern as to the impact from using it as a recreational resource. Nonetheless, it became increasingly apparent to me that the involvement in these activities had a substantial impact on the participants and I became receptive to the idea that this type of 'adventure tourism' could be vindicated through the end result justifying the means. Although the experiences were an excellent example of the learning process described in the outdoor education world by James (1980) as "letting the mountains speak for themselves", this did not in my mind justify the considerable charitable, financial and environmental resources committed to delivering specific intended outcomes in a fragile environment.

Through the management position I held in the Lake District Calvert Trust, I was able to focus the work at the Lake District Centre to develop a more structured approach to outdoor education and the learning outcomes. Due to the organisational structure (described in Section 1.5.4 above) I could not influence the work of the other Calvert Trust Centres. I remained concerned that although they were providing an enjoyable experience valued by their customers, because of their recreational focus they were not optimising the learning outcomes that could potentially accrue from participating in outdoor education. I recognised that these concerns would be immaterial if the 'mountains really did speak for themselves' (James, 1980). Additionally I recognised that these recreational visitors might never have taken part in any

form of outdoor education if they had not been presented as a recreational pursuit and therefore some gain was preferable to none. On the other hand, if changes could be made to increase the benefit to the participants and society through the work of the Calvert Trust, then I considered that there was an obligation to try to do so.

The above concerns formed the basis of the thinking behind the research presented in this thesis. This also drove the main research question:

> What are the benefits of outdoor education for people with disabilities and to what degree are these influenced by: the nature of the people who form the clientele of the different Calvert Trust Centres; the structure and contents of the different activity programmes offered by each of them; and the diversity in the techniques used to help individuals process the learning and transfer this learning from an outdoor setting to everyday living?

1.7 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is structured to enable the narrative of the research to flow as naturally as possible. The ten chapters are linked together to provide a journey through the background to this research project and the context in which the research is situated. It moves on to the research design, then through the research phases until finally it arrives at those elements that may be drawn out of the findings and what these may mean to the Calvert Trust.

In the introductory chapter, the circumstances that brought about the research are outlined. A definition of outdoor education and its purpose are presented along with a situational description of the Calvert Trust and how myself as the researcher is located within the research. This outline of the thesis is also provided.

Chapters 2 and 3 contain a literature review in two parts. The first part looks at the literature in relation to the factors that influence the outcomes from outdoor education programmes and how having a disability may impact on these factors. The second part, evaluates the benefits from outdoor education programmes and in particular how these relate to people with

disabilities. Other benefits that may only be obtained by those with disabilities are also identified.

The research questions that are raised from the review of the literature are stated in Chapter 4. This chapter goes on to discuss the methodological issues which have led to the pragmatic mixed methods research design for this study. The ethical issues and other difficulties relating to the conduct of research with disabled populations are identified along with the actions taken within the research design in an attempt to address these issues.

The research itself was conducted in four distinct phases, with each addressing the research questions from a different viewpoint. Each phase has a different respondent population and uses different research methods (see Table 1.3). These phases run consecutively, with each phase informing or guiding the focus of the inquiry in the subsequent phases. Descriptions of the separate research phases are provided in Chapters 5 to 8, with a discussion relating to that phase of the research contained within the chapter.

Chapter 9 pulls together all four of the research phases. This chapter identifies the overall findings in relation to the original research questions that have been drawn from the four separate investigations. These findings are discussed in relation to literature identified in Chapters 1 and 2 as well as to other research conducted in the field. The limitations of the research design are also identified.

In the concluding chapter, the major findings along with recommendations for the Calvert Trust which may be drawn from these are identified. The major limitations of the research are restated along with how future research may be informed by this work. The concluding remarks emphasise the value of outdoor education for people with disabilities and how this is important for wider society.

Table 1.3: Map showing research phases, respondents and research methods used

Research Phase	Dates	Respondents	Responses included	Research method
1	2002-5	Visiting leaders	n=502	Post-course evaluation questionnaires using free-text and numerically rated attributes
		Instructional staff	n=703	Content analysis of free-text response reports
2	2006-8	Visiting leaders	n=395	Post-course evaluation questionnaires using free-text and Likert scale ratings
		Participants	n=2,503	Post-course evaluation questionnaires using free-text and Likert scale ratings
3	2009-10	Calvert Trust trustees, managers and instructors	n=17	Semi-structured e-mail interviews
		Customer decision makers	n=17	Semi-structured e-mail interviews
4	2012-13	Participants	n=23	Semi-structured face-to-face interviews
		Participant significant others	n=18	Semi-structured face-to-face or telephone interviews

1.8 Overview

The aim of the research to be reported in this thesis is to better understand the value of outdoor education for those with disabilities and to explore the impact that participating in adventurous outdoor activities may have on their lives. Although both the Zurich Community Trust and the Calvert Trust, the funders and sponsors of this research, clearly have a vested interest in the findings of this research, due to the altruistic nature of both organisations, this is not deemed to present a serious conflict of interests.

As the researcher, my own beliefs and viewpoints must inevitably affect both the focus of the research and consequently to some degree its findings. However, the research was conducted within the framework of a PhD

research training and the role of the University of Edinburgh and my supervisory team was to ensure that the research remained objective and rigorous and was not compromised or biased by my previous role within the Calvert Trust, by my personal views on the research topic, or by the source of my funding.

It is acknowledged that the value of outdoor education for each of my research respondents will have been influenced by their individual, personal experiences. It is also recognised that as a complex, multi-faceted organisation, with 3 Centres with differing characteristics and offering different experiences, the value to any individual is also likely to have been influenced by the specific Calvert Trust Centre visited. This in turn is likely to have been influenced by geography, the nature of the individual's disability and/or the main purpose of their visit.

The in-depth case study of the work of the Calvert Trust to be presented in following chapters was carried out in all 3 Centres and draws conclusions which take into account these differing influencing factors wherever this is possible. The next two chapters, however, review the existing literature on outdoor education, assesses the current evidence base on its value for those with disabilities, and outlines competing theories of how outdoor education provides participants with something of much longer term value than just an adventurous few days spent in the outdoors.

Chapter 2

A review of the literature Part 1: The factors that influence the outcomes from outdoor education

2.1 Introduction

In conducting the literature review into the value of outdoor education for people with disabilities for this thesis, searches for journal articles were conducted using the Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC) and Thomson Reuters *Web of Knowledge* data-bases. A variety of search terms were used but low return rates were experienced. The most successful terms were *outdoor* + *disability* and *adventure* + *disability*. ERIC provided the highest return rate for articles published within the past 10 years with 29 'hits' for *outdoor* + *disability* and 13 for *adventure* + *disability*. After irrelevant articles had been discarded, 3 articles remained for each of the two search-term combinations. When the search was expanded to articles published over the past 20 years the 'hit rates' were 115 and 71 with a proportional number of irrelevant articles reducing the relevant number to 15 and 13 respectively.

'Hand' searches into appropriate journals held in the University of Edinburgh library were also conducted. The search of specialist journals was more successful in locating relevant articles relating to the area of interest in outdoor education and people with disabilities. The journal providing the majority of articles was the *Therapeutic Recreation Journal* (58) but with a number also being obtained from *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly* (15). The references lists from articles in these journals led to other relevant articles in conference papers and specialist journals from separate but related fields.

In this chapter, factors identified in the literature as influencing the outcomes of outdoor education are reviewed. There are many component factors which have been identified as important to outcomes, but writers such as Ewert (1987), Prouty, Pannicucci, & Collinson (2007) and Neill (2007) state that the three major influences are the *people* involved, the *programme* followed and the *processes* used to obtain the learning. That these factors have an effect on the outcomes of outdoor education has been supported by literature reviews (e.g. Barrett & Greenaway, 1996) and meta-analyses (e.g. Cason & Gillis, 1994). Although it may be argued that these three elements will affect any learning situation, if these have a major impact on the outcomes of outdoor education there is a need to better understand the influence they may have in this specific setting. This chapter investigates these three areas in more detail and the effect that they may have on the outcomes of an outdoor education experience at the Calvert Trust.

The terms *people, programme* and *process,* as used above, have been drawn from the North American literature and because of this may have cultural interpretations. To ensure clarity, I shall explain how these are used in this thesis. The term *people* refers to the participants undertaking the outdoor education experiences (when used in this context). The term *programme* refers to the activities undertaken and may also include the physical environment or social context in which the activities are undertaken when these are an integral part of that programme. On occasions the term *course* is used when referring to a programme of outdoor education and this may imply a connected series of events rather than a formal, structured educational progression. The term *process* refers to the learning processes which are used within a programme to help the individual to gain from the experience or to help deliver the intended learning outcomes. This term may also refer to the way an individual attempts to ‘make sense’ of his or her own experiences.

This part of the literature review starts by looking at people with disabilities as the subject of this research and how they are treated in contemporary society

in order to provide a context for the work of the Calvert Trust. It moves on to consider the outdoors as a medium for a learning intervention, examining the components that make up a programme of outdoor education and those which are believed to influence the outcomes. Finally it looks at the theory behind the learning processes and why this arena is deemed so powerful. The literature on the outcomes of outdoor education experiences for people with disabilities is covered in Chapter 3.

2.2 The people

Every individual is different, and an individual's personality and past experiences will provide a lens through which they will view their world. This will include the way they view their outdoor experiences which in turn will affect the learning outcomes which they take from that experience.

From his synthesis of the literature, Neill (2007) considers an individual's background, which he describes as "stored experiences", as the most influential factor in determining the outcomes of outdoor education programmes and this is supported by research evidence (Hattie, Marsh, Neill, & Richards, 1997; Sibthorp, Paisley, & Gookin, 2007).

For courses aimed at personal development, Neill (2007) expands on the individual's background and from his research identifies an individual's previous experiences, motivation to participate, personal goals and readiness for change as the important antecedent factors. These are again supported by Sibthorp, et al. (2007) in their research into a single programme with specific intended outcomes. However, in his research with 300 participants in diving and sailing adventures, Sibthorp (2003a) could not find evidence to support a link of the antecedent factors such as motivation to this programme's outcomes, although this may have been a consequence of the narrow range of activities, specific age group and outcomes measured. Herbert (1998) is cautious of the reported effect of motivation as he considers that well motivated participants are likely to report improvements from outdoor courses as this is what they are seeking.

Both Hattie, et al. (1997) and McKenzie (2000) found that a programme of outdoor education had a greater positive impact on adults when compared to adolescents and children. Neill (2007) again attributes these variations to differences in motivation and the degree of compulsion to participate (compulsion being greater in children and adolescents). With respect to sex, both McKenzie (2003) and Neill (1997) found a greater positive effect of courses on females whist Hattie et.al. (1997) found no difference in effect sizes between the sexes. Neill (2007) concludes that “there are no clear differences in overall or specific outcomes for males or females … [from] … empirically measured effects of outdoor education programs”.

From the findings of the above research with non-disabled people, it is probable that the greatest benefit from outdoor education is obtained by those who are seeking change within themselves and have clear goals. Considering people with disabilities, there should be no difference in these antecedent influences, although this motivation may be less central in those with significant levels of intellectual disabilities, a topic which has received little research attention.

It can be concluded that although there may be influences on the outcomes due to demographic or motivational factors, the preceding life experiences of an individual are most likely to have the greatest influence on what that individual gains from an outdoor education experience. This may be amplified for people with disabilities due to their notable differences in life experiences. As the range of life experiences are likely to be greater across the disabled population as a whole and within any specific group of disabled people, there is likely to be a greater need for tailoring outdoor education design and delivery to the needs of the individual participants (Rogers, 1983).

2.2.1 Personal aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of participating in outdoor education should be driven by the needs of the individual participants. These will affect a number of decisions concerning the programme and its delivery. These decisions

may include the geographical location, the chosen activities, the approach to outdoor education, the accommodation and catering arrangements, the other participants on the programme or other people sharing the accommodation. An outdoor education provider may be selected because of one or all of the above factors or because of their philosophy or experience in delivering the intended objectives. All of the above will affect the outcomes, to a greater or lesser degree, that any individual or group of participants gain from their experience.

Although outdoor education programmes can be designed to deliver specific goals and objectives they are unlikely to be successful in doing so without first considering the participants. Fine (1999, p.198) states:

> There are obvious important differences between age and life stages and these need to have a significant consideration in program design.

As has been discussed, the motivation of an individual to attend a course will affect their attitude to the programme and thus what they will gain from participation. Participants attending the same course but with different aims are likely to gain different outcomes from the programme as they are responding to the experiences in different ways (Sibthorp, 2003a). Having clear goals assists with the programme design, ensuring that this is most suitable for the intended outcomes, as well as making it easier to evaluate whether the outcomes have been achieved.

2.2.2 Disabled people in society

To better understand the impact that different life experiences may have on an individual, it is useful to consider the position of disabled people as members of contemporary Western or UK society as this is likely to impact on the attitude of the individuals that attend the Calvert Trust Centres. This is discussed below, but to emphasise the differences, McAvoy & Lais (1999, p.404) are again quoted:

> What is unique is the place from which persons with disabilities start. Their day-to-day reality is different from those who do not have a disability. The realities of a disability, and the societal attitudes that place limits on those with disabilities, make adventure that much more precious.

In most of the Western world, people with disabilities are a disadvantaged sub-set of society. When individuals with disabilities are compared to their peers without disabilities they are deprived in eight key areas of life: education, employment, income, health care, transportation, socialising, political participation and life satisfaction (National Organisation on Disability, 2004). All of these areas are interconnected as the limited opportunity for employment and education restricts income which in turn impacts on all the other aspects of life (Hirst & Baldwin, 1994; Louvet, 2007; National Organisation on Disability, 2004). Burns & Graefe (2007) noted that a typical adult with a physical disability is single, lives with their immediate family and in an urban environment. Although often reasonably well educated, he or she is likely to be unemployed and thus living on a limited income. Employment opportunities, social and recreational activities, the prospect of marriage and having a family are severely limited for disabled people (Hirst & Baldwin, 1994; Zoerink, 1988a). For people with acquired disabilities, Latimer, Ginis, & Hicks (2005) found a similar scenario in that, following their accident, people with spinal cord injuries not only contend with pain but also with "financial hardship, restricted employment opportunities, change in social roles and relationships" (p.131).

2.2.3 Social construction theory and the social model of disability

Social construction theory explains the process by which knowledge is created and is assumed to be a reality. It assumes that meaning is constructed through social interactions and that the subsequent behaviours and language of individuals reflect that meaning. To become a 'reality', this construction must obtain a continual and collective meaning. This is obtained

through wider social interactions with similar interpretations being made, until the constructed meaning becomes a 'shared social reality'. The social construction of reality is context specific and hence behaviours and meanings may vary in different situations (Berger & Luckman, 1966).

A number of writers on the disability agenda (e.g. P. C. Higgins, 1992; Shogan, 1998) regard the above as the process by which the concept of disability is defined and maintained, so disability is a socially constructed phenomena. They consider that disability is caused by the failure of society to take into account the needs of disabled people with respect to access to buildings or the working environment and ultimately this is considered a form of social oppression as described by the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (1976, p. 14):

> In our view it is society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society.

This approach that disability is a socially constructed phenomena is called the 'social model of disability' (Finkelstein, 1981; M. Oliver, 1996; Schillmeier, 2010; Shakespeare, 2010) and it is these social constructs that are the primary disabling elements in society rather than any physical, intellectual or sensory impairment. Attempts to rectify personal impairments, rather than the social issues which create disability, are considered to fall within the 'medical model of disability' (Sherrill, 1986), an approach shunned by many disabled activists.

This point is demonstrated by considering the differing contexts in which a person with a disability may be encountered, the relative impact of their disability and the difference between the terms 'impairment' and 'disability':

> To be impaired is to lack part of or all of a limb, or have a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body … [whereas] disability is the disadvantage or restriction of

> activity of people who have an impairment. (M. Oliver, 1996, p. 22)

Thus, in an outdoor activity situation, a kayaker with a leg amputation, when on the water will continue to have an *impairment* but may not be regarded as having a *disability* as they are not disadvantaged in this activity. As a result they are not a disabled kayaker but rather a kayaker (who happens to have an impairment).

The social model of disability is closely associated with disability politics and these are not universally supported within the disabled community. In an empirical study of 318 disabled people and 1,752 non-disabled people, Staniland (2011) found that disabled people (54% of respondents) are less likely than non-disabled people (64% of respondents) to express views in line with the social model of disability, although most agree that the approach of non-disabled people contributes to preventing disabled people from living a full life.

Aligned to the social model of disability are the attitudes and prejudices of others towards people with disabilities. Abrams & Houston's (2006) analysis of the 2005 national survey comparing attitudes towards people with a range of other characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, religion or belief) found that disabled people were regarded as the least economically successful of all the groups; only people over 70 were felt to be less capable. Disabled people were seen to attract feelings of 'pity' and 'admiration' and 35% of people surveyed felt disabled people took more from the economy than they put in. These latter attitudes are referred to as 'benevolent prejudices' because they are based on the belief that people need looking after rather than reflecting overt hostility (Perske, 1972; Staniland, 2011). Such benevolent prejudices can still be as damaging to the lives of an individual as disabled people are given fewer opportunities because they are regarded as being less capable. This perception of lack of capability and associated vulnerability has even been seen to contribute to disabled people

being a preferred target for criminal activity (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2009).

Disabled people are often considered incapable of, or excluded from, making decisions about their own lives. An example of this is in healthcare decisions where there may be “up to twenty-three professional helpers involved in the life of one disabled person” and because of this there is the risk of being “sucked into a culture of dependence” (C. Barnes, 2010, p. 28). The impact on the life of a disabled person is highlighted in Lawson, Delamere, & Hutchinson (2008, p. 243):

> [There is] disjuncture between theoretical beliefs and reality of client-centred care. Well meaning professionals planned to set my goals and I was expected to passively adjust to their system ... I felt totally invalidated as an individual. Decisions were made for me, not by me.

2.2.4 Social identity theory and the ‘spoiling’ of normal identity

Social identity theory claims that people identify themselves through their similarity or differences to others who hold significance for them (Turner, 1984). Our behaviour is influenced by our allegiances to certain groups to which we belong or aspire to join. Social identity provides a sense of belonging through our affiliation with these groups or communities. The members within these groups categorise other individuals as being either ‘in’ or ‘out’ of their community, based on their compliance with their socially established norms; biases and negative attitudes are built up towards those who are out of the group (Turner, 1984).

For people with disabilties there is restricted access to the social environments where compliance with a group’s norms may be demonstrated. This prevents the individual from becoming a member of the group, so, irrespective of their affiliations or aspirations, people with disabilities become assigned to the ‘out’ group (H. Hahn, 1987; M. Oliver, 1989). This has a knock-on effect, creating further barriers to social inclusion, as the skills used

to build interpersonal relationships with non-disabled people are neither learnt nor practised. This process further isolates the individual in what becomes a “de-socialising spiral” (Blinde & McClung, 1997).

Goffman’s work on stigma sits within social identity theory. Goffman (1963, p.13) described stigma as “an attribute that is deeply discrediting within a particular social interaction”. This ‘attribute’ is one which does not meet the norms of the majority of society and thus the person with the attribute is “reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one” (p.14). Goffman identifies “abominations of the body [with] various physical deformities” as being one of his three categories for stigmatisation, with “blemishes of character” and “tribal stigmatisation” being the other two. Goffman goes on to describe how we use first appearances to help us quickly identify an individual’s attributes and his or her social identity. Certain attributes tend to become an individual’s over-riding or ‘master status’, with people being treated by this master status category, rather than as individuals (Goffman, 1963).

Coleman-Brown (2010) looked at stigma from affective, cognitive and behavioural viewpoints and saw stigmatisation as a consequence of social comparison whereby individuals seek a superior social status. She considered that learning to stigmatise was part of our early social educational experiences, and thus ingrained and unavoidable. The dominant groups in society determine which attributes are undesirable and ensure the minority groups are stigmatised by these, thus ensuring they assume an inferior social position. The degree of stigmatisation depends on how undesirable the attribute is. Physical abnormalities are some of the most undesirable because they are “physically salient, represent some deficiency or distortion in the bodily form and, in most cases, are unalterable” (p.180).

The ‘stereotype content model’ explains why negative perceptions are held of those who deviate from the ‘normal’ and why people respond negatively towards them (Barg, Armstrong, Hetz, & Latimer, 2010). This model has

stereotypes measured along the two dimensions of ‘competence’ and ‘warmth’. Competence refers to the ability to carry out specific tasks and actions successfully and encompasses qualities of independence, confidence and intelligence, with these reflecting a person's status in society. Warmth refers to sociality and morality which includes friendliness, trustworthiness, and sincerity (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Extreme positive stereotypes are both high in competence and high in warmth whilst extreme negative stereotypes are low in both. Stereotypes can be mixed on these two dimensions, and respondents from an international study rated both children and disabled people as having low competence and high warmth. The stated feelings of the respondents towards individuals with low competence and high warmth are pity, sympathy and disrespect (Fiske, et al., 2002).

Being the subject of these feelings by others has a detrimental effect on an individual’s self-concept (Barg, et al., 2010; T. Williams, 1994). Being considered of low competence implies being “dependent, inferior, passive and weak” (Taub, Blinde, & Greer, 1999, p. 1470) and these attributes are often internalised by the individual who consequently behaves in a manner consistent with societal expectations (Blinde & McClung, 1997; Coleman-Brown, 2010; T. Williams, 1994).

2.2.5 Contact theory and the case for integration or inclusion

Contact theory considers that the interaction between people with differences leads to a greater understanding and tolerance of those differences and as a result a reduction in prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination (Allport, 1954).

Allport (1954) acknowledges that contact alone is not sufficient to bring about these positive changes. If badly handled, the result of the contact may be negative: for example, minimal or infrequent contact may reinforce negative perceptions. Thus it is essential that in the interaction between differing groups, individuals must have equal status with the focus being on a common goal. This will provide an experience which is mutually rewarding and may develop personal relationships which can be maintained over time.

The variable nature of the experience may be the factor that has generated the mixed results reported in research involving inclusion and integration in outdoor programmes, such as those reported by Devine (2004, 2007), McAvoy & Lais (2003), McAvoy, Schatz, Stutz, Schleien, & Lais (1989) and Wilhite, Devine, & Goldenberg (1999). An alternative standpoint could be to challenge the extent to which contact theory works. Although it is accepted that having contact with disabled people can provide a greater understanding and tolerance of differences, the differences in ability between disabled people and their non-disabled peers can create disparities in the activities undertaken, thus developing a gulf between individual interests. It is possible that it is the lack of shared interests which prevents the building of relationships and creates barriers to friendship. Brodin (2009) provides support for this interpretation through her study of relationships in inclusive education in Sweden where both full- and long-term contact between disabled and non-disabled children was the norm. She observed that during leisure time, play started to become more competitive in the 7-11 age group and as a result the disabled children began to become excluded which resulted in their choosing activities that they were better able to perform. These activities were not the first choice of either the disabled or non-disabled children. As a consequence the number of the disabled children's friends decreased. Between 12 and 18 years of age, peers typically replace parents as the significant others and peer competition continued to increase along with an interest in the opposite sex. In this age range, those with disabilities failed to make meaningful inroads into the social interests of their non-disabled counterparts and exclusion accelerated rapidly. Programmes of outdoor education stimulated co-operation and understanding between the groups of disabled and non-disabled people, but this was insufficient to stem the effect of their divergent interests and abilities.

2.2.6 Disabled people and the outdoors

Although there has been a long history of certain groups with disabilities being involved in the outdoors (El-Masri, 2011), generally people with

disabilities have had very restricted opportunities to participate in outdoor activities or outdoor education programmes. A number of barriers exist which prevent participation (Jones, 2009; Shields, Synnot, & Barr, 2012), but the over-riding issue is that the nature of the outdoor environment, the physical demands of adventurous activities and the lack of adapted technical equipment make the outdoors at best challenging, but more realistically, a hostile environment for people with disabilities (Croucher, 1981; Mabbs, 2007; Swiderski, 1989). Further barriers are created by the concerns of outdoor providers that the outdoor adventure environment is too dangerous, the over-protectiveness of families or other gate-keepers, and the lack of role models (Shields, et al., 2012).

Whilst attempting to make outdoor activities more accessible to disabled people, Swiderski (1989, p.21) suggested that “we are inhibited by our attitudes more than any physical limitations (of participants).” In conducting research into the attitudes of outdoor activity delivery staff, Herbert (2000) found that staff were generally positive in their views towards people with disabilities and believed that this was likely to stem from the need of instructors to work with all the individuals on their courses in a positive, supporting and non-judgemental way. There was a preference by some instructors to work with certain disability groups and this seemed to be dependent on the individual’s training or the experience he or she had of working with those groups. Devine (2004) found that it was the severity of disability which determined which disabled groups instructors preferred to work with, the more severe disabilities being less preferable. Whilst the general population avoids people with cognitive impairments (Staniland, 2011), for outdoor staff the greatest cause for concern was individuals with mobility impairments (Herbert, 1997). This is attributed to a lack of knowledge as to the ways activities can be adapted or the non-availability of suitable equipment to enable participation, as both of these are essential to success on these programmes. Herbert (2000) also identified preferences for working with certain disability groups. Those with perceived personal responsibility for

the cause of the disability, for example disabilities that were assumed to be self-inflicted (e.g. AIDS or those related to drug misuse), were given a low preference. Preference was also affected by how well an individual coped or had adjusted to their disability, with those with a positive personal attitude being rated higher.

Hierarchies of disability also exist within the disabled community (Devine, 2004; Devine & Wilhite, 1999). Corbett (1997, p. 97) states that white males with spinal cord injuries are the "dominant group whose voices are most often heard." She identifies disabled women and those from other groups, such as people with learning disabilities and mental health issues, as being "on the edge of the dominant discourse, getting their views often marginalised". Staniland (2011) agrees that people with learning disabilities or mental health conditions are more likely to encounter prejudice than those with sensory or physical impairments. This may be seen as a contributing factor to the degree to which different disability groups have gained access to both sport and outdoor activities with the range of sports and sports organisations for differing disabilities being testament to these opinions. The exclusion from the Paralympics of people with learning disabilities with their segregation into the Special Olympics is further testament to the hierarchies and prejudices which exist both within Western society and internally within the disabled community.

Many disabled people do not wish to join groups of other disabled people for sport or other activities but try to blend as far as possible into the non-disabled community (Corbett, 1997). There are societal beliefs and government policies that support this approach to a greater or lesser degree. Examples of these that relate to the outdoors include the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA, 2008, p. 3) who state that:

> Outdoor activities are often associated with white, middle aged, middle class and non-disabled people. The Government firmly believes that all sectors of the community should be given equal opportunity to appreciate and enjoy the natural environment.

and the Department of Health (Department of Health, 2001, p. 80) who found evidence that:

> People with learning disabilities often do not take part in ordinary leisure activities. Leisure is rarely built into individual or community care plans. It tends to be seen as an optional extra… Enabling people to use a wider range of leisure opportunities can make a significant contribution to improving quality of life, can help to tackle social exclusion, and encourage healthy life styles.

Natural England (2008, 2010) also recognise the limited opportunities disabled people have to experience and enjoy the natural environment that many take for granted.

Unfortunately, such well-meaning statements or policies do not always make a difference to the lives of disabled people as they are frequently un-resourced or not followed through in practice. An example of this in relation to education in general is that, despite similar recommendations in the Warnock Report for Special Education (1978), some 42 years later Hodkinson (2010, p. 61) concluded that:

> It is now time to develop a new vision for the education of children with special educational needs and disabilities that is supported by straightforward, co-ordinated and well-resourced policies. If educational policy is to achieve an inclusive consciousness, it must ensure that … inclusion is by the choice of the pupils and their parents and not by compulsion.

In summary, it seems clear that the role of disabled people in society has been determined by the often stereotypical perceptions of others regarding an individual's attributes and abilities. These perceptions include an over-extension of the implications of the impairment, leading to a belief that those with disabilities are inevitably less capable or productive than exists in reality. Disabled people have been excluded and thus lack the confidence to make decisions about their own lives and are subsequently seen as passive, dependent and are objects of pity and of aid. The above is connected to the

opportunity for employment, as this restricts income which in turn impacts on every aspect of the individual's life.

Government policies are written with the intention of providing affordable solutions that better meet the needs of disabled people. However, these do not necessarily address public perceptions that may have a major impact on the lives of those with disabilities. By providing disabled people with the opportunities to participate in activities often thought to be outside their capabilities, and helping them develop the skills to perform in a dynamic physical environment with a perceived high level of risk, organisations like the Calvert Trust have tried to alter the aspirations of disabled people. Through this route, they have also aimed to alter the attitudes of non-disabled people towards their disabled peers, to dispel stereotypes and to manage the stigma associated with disabilities (Blinde & McClung, 1997; Wright, 1990).

2.3 The programme

> At work here, we often refer to the 'programme'. However, that piece of paper really is only the beginning and is really only a list of staff and resources that is available (Calvert Trust instructor, interviewed in Phase 3 of this research – see Chapter 7).

A well-designed programme for outdoor education is not the simple timetabling of a series of activities that a group will undertake, as described in the quote above. It needs to take into account a number of other elements and must primarily focus on the nature of the participants along with the aims of participation and then consider the optimum method of delivering the outcomes through the activities undertaken and the learning processes used. It is the programme design that draws together the people and the learning processes in order to generate a successful formula for the delivery of the intended outcomes.

Some writers argue that this approach to outdoor education, which suggests a structured experience with predetermined measurable outcomes, may be

considered 'algorithmic'[4] in approach (Ringer, 1999), a 'commodification'[5] of the outdoors (Loynes, 2002) and not truly experiential (Hovelynck, 2001). Others argue for a carefully considered approach. Christie, Higgins, & McLaughlin (2013, p. 19) agree with Nicol (2001) when they state that "programmes should be designed carefully to address intended learning outcomes".

Ward-Thompson, Travlou, Roe, & Orme (2010, p.30) noted the issues relating to 'commodification', but recognised that a structured and packaged delivery may be the only way in which some young people have the opportunity to engage with outdoor adventure.

In addition, Hitzig, Alton, Leong, & Gatt (2012, p. 221) explain the necessity for programmes to be structured in order to "provide some accountability on how the program is conducted, including providing some insight on how participants may benefit from the program" so as to obtain the required financial and staffing resources for the continuation of a high-cost provision, in order to enable more people to attend the programme in future (which in their case was for rehabilitation).

Programmes designed in this way may not be as truly experiential as Hovelynck (2001) may wish, but they do provide some meaningful experiences in the lives of the participants which may be used for learning and reflection, especially for people with disabilities with their limited opportunities for such experiences. Providing the aims of the programme are clear and that the design and the processes used within it are centred on the needs of the individuals participating then a structured programme design seems appropriate.

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[4] Ringer (1999, p.2) describes 'algorithmic' as following a "flow chart that can be applied by anyone who has the competences to complete each step".

[5] Ward-Thompson, Travlou, Roe, & Orme (2010, p. 30) define 'commodification' as "the transformation of engagement with wild adventure space into a commercial relationship".

The literature provides some help in identifying what elements should be included in programme design. Priest and Gass (1997, p. 22) name the ten "hallmarks of good adventure programming" as experiential, dramatic, novel, consequential, metaphoric, transferable, structured, voluntary, concrete, and holistic. McKenzie (2003) identifies five essential ingredients a programme needs to have in order to achieve the intended outcomes. These are: achieving success, challenge, learning new skills, being responsible for oneself, and having fun. All of these elements might not be regarded as essential by all practitioners but they do provide a useful guide to areas to be considered in programme design.

The sequencing of the activities within a programme will have an impact on the learning outcomes (Beard & Wilson, 2006; Bisson, 1999; Kimball & Bacon, 1993; Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988) so this too is an important consideration when designing a programme, although in many situations the options for sequencing are restricted though the limitations of the resources available and the conflicts that arise with other programmes that are running.

Returning to the issue of the *people*, it has long been recognised that a weakness in outdoor centres is that they are not aware of participants' personalities and that they have difficulties in providing what T. Parker and Meldrum (1973, p.90) describe as "a carefully graduated and progressive programme". Parker and Meldrum (p.89) also state that it is "only with previous knowledge of the students is it possible to react sympathetically to their particular interests and fears and to select situations which are best calculated to achieve the desired reaction". They were writing in the context of flourishing outdoor education provision in the UK, but their argument then as now highlights the importance of outdoor centres establishing good links with schools and other clients to ensure their programme design addresses the intended outcomes. Unfortunately, over 30 years later, Ofsted (2004b, p.13) recognised that this issue has not yet been addressed:

> … too often such coordination [between school and centre] is absent and this challenging environment is

> only recognised as a ‘one-off’ activity. Consequently, the work of the programme is not developed further when students return to school, so that the long-term benefits are lost.

Beames, Higgins, & Nicol (2012) consider that in formal education, outdoor learning programmes should be progressive, emulating from the curriculum and starting with very locally conducted contexts. Christie, Higgins, & McLaughlin (2013, p.16), in their detailed and long-term study of a tailored programme for schools in a specific geographical area and social context, emphasise the importance of “embedding the [residential] programme within the school curriculum” to increase the longevity of the benefits, as students are encouraged to build upon their experiences, an approach supported by Ofsted (2004b). Nicol (2001) suggests that to fulfil its aims a programme should be carefully designed to address the intended learning outcomes along with consideration of the learning processes used to deliver these outcomes before any evaluation is carried out or any claims are made about its success.

The respondent in the opening quote to this section continued in their interview to suggest that:

> The activities are only vehicles for other things. When these 'other things' are only tenuously linked … a facilitator is ineffective. When they are clear, achievable and relevant, the facilitator is effective.

2.3.1 Components of an outdoor education programme

Outdoor adventurous activities

For many in schools the concept of outdoor education *is* the outdoor activities. These are the images presented to parents on publicity documents and the motivating factor for many pupils to participate. Unfortunately this same image of outdoor education as just fun outdoor activities and thus “holidays in school time” (Christie, et al., 2013, p. 1) may also be used to criticise outdoor education by other teachers whose subjects are disrupted by

the demands of outdoor education visits on the timetable, school resources and staff time.

For activity holiday participants, the activities themselves are *the* purpose of the visit, and the image of these activities is often used by parents as the attraction to encourage offspring to leave home for a week.

In addition to being 'fun', the activities have the potential to fulfil all five components which McKenzie (2003) above considered essential, as well as contributing to the majority of Priest and Gass' (1997) "hallmarks of good adventure" in that they can often be *experiential, dramatic, novel, consequential, metaphoric,* and *concrete*. Thus it can be seen that the attributes of adventurous activities are core to good outdoor education, or even education generally. However, it may also be argued that the activities themselves are unimportant as they are only the medium through which the learning takes place. McKenzie's (2000) overview of the literature (although none was from the UK) concluded that it was the "qualities" of the activities that were responsible for any learning outcomes, rather than the activities themselves. Neill's (2007) review of the literature agreed that there were no clear differences in outcomes between different activities although he did recognise that individuals may be "struck" by a particular activity which then had a greater influence on that individual.

Physical environment

Outdoor education writers agree that the setting of the experience is an essential ingredient for outdoor learning. From his synthesis of the literature, Neill (2007, n.p.) considers that the quality of the environment has a direct influence on the outcomes of programmes. He describes the ideal environment as "unique, engaging … compelling, intense, challenging [and] adventurous".

Beames, et al. (2012) argue that the home location is where outdoor education experiences should start. From here, students may better

understand their local environment and through this be able to make comparisons with other environments remote from their locality in the future. P. Simpson's (2007) research into 'new space' also regarded the quality of the natural environment as important, as according to Bell, et al. (2004) people often regard natural areas as being boring. Many of the instructors in his study used the natural environment to generate interest and to compare the differences in the natural environment to those of the students' home environments, typically in suburban or urban locations. My personal experiences working with school teachers mirrors the approach described by Simpson. Teachers often considered that the local environment did not generate interest for the students as this was the area they had grown up in and so they were familiar with it. Taking students into a contrasting environment helped the teachers to engage the students in their local surroundings through being able to make comparisons to an area of contrast, particularly if students attached a high-value to the area with which comparisons were being made, a point recognised by Beames, et al. (2012). Hence the developmental stage of the participant, the intended outcomes, the relative quality of the outdoor environment, the resources available and the skills of staff all need to be considered before a decision is made as to the most appropriate programme of activity, the best method of delivery and the most fitting physical location for this to happen.

Environmental awareness and place

Many outdoor courses take place in the natural environment and many practitioners regard an experience of 'nature' as an important component of outdoor education (P. Simpson, 2008). Some regard the environment and the sustainability agenda as central to, if not the main purpose of, outdoor education (G. Cooper, 2002; P. J. Higgins, 2009; Nicol & Higgins, 2005). Yet there are outdoor education programmes for personal development which take place in urban settings that have little contact with the natural environment and with no emphasis being placed on environmental matters (P. Simpson, 2008).

Urban landscapes are considered to distance people from the functions and reality of the natural world and this 'knowledge deficit' can be addressed through environmental education which:

> … increases people's knowledge and awareness about the environment and the associated challenges … and fosters attitudes, motivations, and commitment to make informed decisions and take responsible action (Shwartz, et al., 2012 n.p.).

Rickinson (2001) reviewed a number of studies on environmental education programmes for schools focusing on changes in knowledge and attitudes and which, having used control groups or pre-post tests, had found improvements in the short-term. However, out of school studies, such as residential outdoor education, were specifically excluded from his review. Wells & Lekies (2006) found long-term associations between childhood experiences and adult environmental attitudes, but that participation in formal environmental education programmes had not made a significant contribution to this. They hypothesised that this may be because the experiences were structured rather than spontaneous, as Kellert (2002) found that orchestrated or restricted contact with nature did not have a major long-term impact on children.

G. Cooper (2010) describes how leaders can help pupils to live more sustainable lives, giving six areas of benefit that can be taught through connection with the natural environment: reconnection, co-operation, responsibility, tolerance, simplicity and reflection. Nicol (2001) points out that the philosophy of many outdoor staff includes a degree of ecological sensitivity, together with respect and awe for nature. This approach by instructors is likely to have an influence on participants' consideration for the natural environment as centre instructors act as a role-model for action (Outdoor Education Advisors Panel, 2005). Fallis (1991) and Palmberg & Kuru (2000) found the impact of environmental education was more effective when combined with outdoor activities, especially those courses with emotional, aesthetic or creative components, although the latter study was

conducted with school pupils within a narrow age range and in non-UK contexts.

Despite the strong evidence that connection with the natural environment, the outdoors and school or educational experiences can have lasting effects on life-style choices and environmental responsibility (e.g. Ofsted, 2009; Palmer & Suggate, 1996; Wells & Lekies, 2006), any changes in attitudes or good intentions towards the environment as a result of one-off, short-term experiences appear to be generally short-lived (Gass, Garvey, & Sugerman, 2003; Rickinson, 2001). In conclusion, although outdoor education, as defined by this thesis (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1) and as offered by the Calvert Trust, may be deemed to contribute to environmental awareness and bring alive environmental curriculum matters, this is likely to be the influence of the personal philosophy of instructional staff and their impact as role models rather a consequence of any formal environmental education input. It cannot be assumed that without on-going support from elsewhere (e.g. in schools), such experiences make a long-term difference to the participants.

Social environment

R. Williams (2012, p. 116), referring to primary school pupils, saw the power of the social environment as:

> … the wonderful degree of support and encouragement that is typically provided by pupils to each other … [which] helps pupils to achieve challenges which they might otherwise not achieve.

He was in no doubt that the recognition and respect gained through behaviours witnessed during participation is carried back to the classroom. Barrett and Greenaway (1996) state that

> even where the [adventure programmes'] emphasis is on individual challenge, participants will often attribute their success to the group support and encouragement (p.17) …[and that] the group influence ... could be a more significant factor than either the 'outdoor' or the 'adventure' ingredients" (p.19).

Outdoor adventurous activity settings also provide a novel social situation to many formal relationships. Notable are the teacher/pupil or carer/disabled person relationships where each may see the other outside the environment of their usual relationship for the first time. In this novel environment there is an altered power or knowledge relationship. The teacher or carer may be in a situation where they are no more experienced than their charges, trying activities for the first time along with those they are responsible for and having to manage anxieties or emotions which the other may or may not be having to address. These situations can also apply to the parent/child or any other hierarchical relationship. For the disabled participant the social and knowledge gaps may be larger as the disabled person, as well as being in the same power relationship as any of those above, may also be dependent on that individual for mobility, personal or social needs. In these situations teachers, carers and parents often express surprise at the achievements of their charges and play a key-role in the long-term opportunities for an individual as, following the individual's performance, parents/teachers/carers have higher expectations for the future (Barrett & Greenaway, 1996). It may be hypothesised that the greater the inequality of the social situation, the greater benefit that may be achieved by removing that inequality and placing both parties in a neutral environment where there is a more equal degree of interdependency.

The input of the instructor, visiting staff or significant other

The leadership of an outdoor education experience is crucial in not only creating and shaping the social context described above, but it is also a determining factor as to the things that are learnt and whether those lessons are transferred to other settings. A crucial role of all accompanying staff or parents is to assist learners in engaging with the activities, appreciating or contrasting the physical environment with others, acting appropriately in social situations and offering pastoral support in the residential setting. Their knowledge of the individual may help frame the experience and set an appropriate level of individual challenge. Ofsted (2004b, p. 15) recognise the

quality of the staff as being a "significant factor in determining the success of centre-based outdoor education" and Phipps & Claxton (1997) provide evidence of the differences between the effectiveness of different staff in obtaining programme objectives. The way in which the instructors (and other 'staff') view their role, as either being a part of the group or set apart from it, has consequential impacts on their relationship with the participants which in turn affects the power balance and influences how individuals in the team construct their learning (M. Brown, 2002; Stan, 2009).

Sibthorp (2003a) found evidence that the quality of the relationship with the leader was a significant predictor of how well the participants did on the course, how they felt about themselves after the course, and whether they expected the course to help them in everyday life. When studying North American teenagers on two limited activity programmes with a commercial provider, Sibthorp (2003a) also found that the more participants felt empowered and supported by the leader, the greater the developmental gains that were achieved. However, when considering the long-term impact of the components of an Outward Bound course in an Eastern cultural setting, Gassner & Russell (2008) established that the course instructor was not perceived by participants to contribute significantly to the longer-term outcomes.

Residential experience

The 1944 Education Act (quoted in Hunt, 1989, p. 28) proposed that:

> … a period of residence in a school camp … would contribute substantially to the health and width of outlook of any child.

This would be particularly true for town dwellers, and this stay was linked in the 1944 Act to activities of "countryside studies and outdoor activities". This concept may have been the vision that started Local Education Authorities establishing residential outdoor education centres. The 'residential experience' has become established in the curriculum of many schools and organisations with a personal development agenda such as the Scouts and

Guides, the purpose of which is summed up by Education Scotland (2011 p.81) as:

> Spending time away from the home environment gives children and young people opportunities to live more independently alongside others, learning new social skills, making decisions and sharing free time. They are often able to take more individual and group ownership of learning.

P.J. Higgins & Nicol (2002, p. 12) attempt to explain the mechanism of the residential setting in generating benefit as being the "provision of a new setting where people can explore ideas relating to individual and group identity" and can "view their everyday life from a different vantage-point", although they do not offer an explanation as to why a new setting for this is required or why this setting needs to be residential. Cason & Gillis (1994) provide evidence of the benefits of residential settings from their meta-analysis where they identified larger effect sizes in the outcomes from residential programmes. They suggest that this may be due to the experience being more "emotionally intense". However, there were likely to be other factors in addition to the residential setting that could have contributed to the larger effect size, as the results were mainly from specific populations where the residential setting was probably only a part of other interventions, for example psychotherapy.

R. Williams (2012) considered that the residential element contributed to the social environment and the support this provided pupils better enabled them to overcome the challenges presented on programmes. Fleming (1998 n.p.) argues that being residential "somehow compressed, magnified, or quickened the development of this 'sense of community'" and "given a limited amount of time … [created] significant interpersonal relationships". Fleming's research identified two overarching effects of the residential setting as "detachment and continuity" (n.p.). The detachment stemmed from the participants being isolated from their 'real world' both physically and psychologically. The continuity was based in the on-going and uninterrupted focus on the programme being followed. The combination of these caused

the participants to become fully immersed in the experience. Although Fleming was working with adult populations, it is likely that for younger participants these same concepts may create situations where there are fewer distractions from other influences in their life and the residential stay, albeit brief, becomes a continuous, on-going experience with no immediate escape. It is the commitment to, and the intensity of the learning that makes an impact on the individual. For younger participants the residential experience is for many the first occasion that they have been separated from their parents. Ofsted's (2004b) report suggests that being away from the home environment creates situations for developing domestic independence and Education Scotland's (2011) policy guidance suggests that as the individual is isolated from the direct influence of their parents this also provides the opportunity for independent development.

2.3.2 Other factors that influence outcomes

The main components of a residential outdoor education programme have been described above. However, the outcomes will be influenced by a number of other factors and the most relevant of these are outlined below.

Length of programme

Neill (2007) rightly questions how the length of a course is measured when comparisons of length are being made. These may be by the number of activity sessions, the number of activity hours or the period of time spent away from the home environment. He also asks whether the same number of hours engagement when spread over an extended period of time (for example one half-day session per week) is more or less effective than the same time spent in an intense week of activity and the impact of including a 'residential experience'.

Although Neill's issues above have not been adequately addressed in research studies, there is a general agreement that research demonstrates that the longer a programme is, the more effective it tends to be in delivering

the outcomes (Cason & Gillis, 1994; Hattie, et al., 1997; P. J. Higgins & Nicol, 2002; Neill, 2007). However, McCulloch (2002), Higgins and Nicol (2002) and Neill (2007) allude to the law of diminishing returns applying in outdoor education in that the gain does not continue to increase linearly but starts to diminish incrementally. Neill (n.p.) emphasises that a long programme is not a guarantee of success, and it is still possible for "a short program to effect substantial, lasting change". McCulloch saw four days as being the critical length in Sail Training for participants to build confidence in their relationships and acquire sufficient technical sailing skills in order to become an effective crew member. Higgins & Nicol (p.13) describe the importance of this period as allowing "relationships between staff and trainees to be established and a shared understanding of the situation to develop". These findings challenge the wisdom of shortening outdoor education courses to below this 'effective' four-day length that is the current trend brought about by financial constraints.

Organisational Culture

The culture and philosophy of the organisation that delivers the outdoor education intervention is likely to have a major impact on the outcomes of a programme (Neill, 2007). This is because decisions taken at a strategic level will have a knock-on effect on all aspects of that organisation's work. These decisions include those regarding staff recruitment, programme design, equipment purchases, safety procedures and levels of acceptable risk. The organisation's philosophy regarding the purpose of their programmes and their commitment to delivering the intended outcomes will affect all the decisions taken in these areas.

An example of the direct influence of an organisation's culture may have on an outdoor programme is provided by Shooter, Sibthorp & Paisley (2009). They point to the importance of selecting instructors because their ethos fits well with the needs of the programme and the organisation's mission, philosophy and goals rather than because they possess the right technical

skills. In following this approach an organisation will perpetuate its culture rather than having its key messages undermined through the alternative interpretations or philosophies of its staff.

Zmudy, Curtner-Smith, & Steffen (2009) demonstrate the indirect influence that an organisational culture may have on outdoor education staff through 'occupational socialisation'. This is where the culture of the organisation affects the way an individual thinks and acts within the context of that organisation. For example individuals working in an organisation with high-levels of professional standards will grow to adopt those standards as their own whilst working there, being aware that these are the norm and by which their performance will be judged.

2.4 The Process

The process may be described as the theoretical underpinning for the developmental outcomes of the outdoor educational experiences. Without an understanding of the process involved, the factors that have contributed to any observed benefits cannot be understood and any changes made to programmes in an attempt to improve the outcomes must be regarded as guesswork, with the mechanisms of any successes left to chance.

Aylward (2005, p. 52) sums up the value of the process when he states:

> As important [as] the outcomes of outdoor education programmes are, the process is key. Outdoor education isn't just about going outdoors, it is about experiencing learning activities outdoors and about reflecting, analysing and synthesising the experience.

2.4.1 How outdoor education works

Theoretical underpinnings of outdoor education

The theoretical and philosophical basis for outdoor education is grounded within experiential learning and the educational psychology that underpins this approach to learning. I do not intend to explore the above in any detail, but only to emphasise the role that experience plays in learning. This

‘experience’ is the medium through which most of us learn, as we use previous experiences as a reference point that inform or guide our future actions. This principle of learning has been described in numerous models or theories (Bandura, 1977; Dewey, 1938; Piaget, 1977) and these writers are still cited within modern writing on outdoor education today, for example by Prouty, et al. (2007), Beames, et al. (2012) and R. Williams (2012).

All of the main theorists above agree that learning cannot take place without reflection, or conversely as Sugerman, Doherty, Garvey, & Gass (2000, p.6) explain:

> … take away reflection and the individual has a series of experiences that are unconnected and ineffective in changing how he or she learns about the world.

Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985, p.19) state that reflection is a cognitive activity where people "recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over, and evaluate it", and this knowledge may be applied to future situations (Greenaway, n.d.).

It can be seen that reflection is a key part of the process to help an individual assimilate what they have learned. Some participants may be naturally reflective and some experiences in outdoor education courses may be so powerful that the individual will reflect spontaneously on the results.

Alternatively, if the messages are more subtle or less obvious or if the participants are less reflective, then there may need to be a guided process whereby learning through reflection can take place so as to realise or maximise the potential outcomes (Sugerman, et al., 2000). In the majority of situations, some degree of assistance is needed to help the learner interpret elements of the experience and assimilate the learning (S. L. Hutchinson & Dattilo, 2001; Phipps & Claxton, 1997; Priest, 1995; Witman, 1993). In the absence of this, the enjoyment of the overall experience may be remembered as opposed to the endeavour and the satisfaction of success as a result of that endeavour (S. L. Hutchinson, Le Blanc, & Booth, 2006). It is likely that

the need for guided reflection will be particularly pertinent for participants using the activities for recreational purposes or those with intellectual impairments as neither group may naturally focus on the learning potential of the experience.

P.J. Higgins and Nicol (2002, p. 6) identify a major role of the instructor as to ensure that “learning is not left to chance” so that whether or not the participant is naturally reflective, the instructor has a responsibility of providing appropriate opportunities for participants to reflect on their experiences and to satisfy themselves that the intended learning has occurred.

2.4.2 The contribution the outdoors makes to learning

In Section 2.3.1 above, reference has been made to the physical environment as a component of outdoor learning. This physical environment generates a number of ‘inputs’ into the outdoor experience. However, the nature of the outdoor environment makes a number of additionally important contributions that assist with an individual learning from the experiences. This section attempts to explain some of these.

Reality of direct learning experiences

Dewey (1938) championed the need for direct learning experiences and these can be readily delivered within an outdoor environment as the activities and tasks offer solvable challenges or problems that are hands-on, concrete and with real constraints (Priest & Gass, 1997). These tasks or activities can also provide immediate feedback in terms of success and frequently reward sustained effort (Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin, & Ewert, 2006). This learning environment provides direct learning experiences that may be contained within relatively short periods of time which enables the lessons learnt to be applied later within the programme (Prouty, et al., 2007). In these situations there is the potential to provide repeat opportunities to reinforce the learning.

Distal to everyday environments

A change of environment to that experienced in everyday life will elicit a different response in individuals due to the different context according to Goffman (1959). Hence participants may be better motivated or behave differently. The novelty of the situation may also make the participant prepared to try new things. If a different response is obtained (either from observed success or through the changed reactions of others) then this may result in greater self-awareness and in addition the individual may be prepared to continue to behave in this altered fashion. However, the distal nature of the setting from the home environment makes the learning and behaviours more difficult to transfer back home.

Memorable

In 2005, Bell, at the time Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of schools, stated that "Outdoor activities … can be among the most memorable experiences for pupils of their school days" (quoted in Outdoor Education Advisors Panel, 2005, p.2). R. Williams' (2012) participants provide supporting evidence that their residential outdoor experience was one of the most memorable aspects of their school career and he goes on to state that "memorability appears to be an important factor in achieving transfer of learning" (p.119). Whilst this may well be the case, being memorable alone does not assist in transfer as the learning has to be relevant to the different situations to enable it to be of any value.

Neill (2007) describes the combination of the factors that make up the ideal environment as "unique, engaging … compelling, intense, challenging [and] adventurous" and this he considers makes many of the outdoor learning experiences extremely memorable. As the events may be recalled for the rest of an individual's life, the experiences may be revisited to reinforce the learning, or reused for further self analysis, and this may help to gain a deeper understanding of the situation (Bandura, 1977; Luckner & Nadler, 1997).

Framework of enjoyment

Being an enjoyable experience does not detract from the learning that can be obtained in any educational setting. It is fortunate that many people find the outdoor learning environment enjoyable, so making the learning setting more engaging. McKenzie (2000) regards the element of enjoyment as affecting the learning outcomes and thus considers this as not just a nice 'add-on' but instead as an essential ingredient of the experience.

Sandberg (2008, cited in Brodin 2009) has shown that play is the primary way through which all young children learn, and when learning in the outdoors, there are fewer contrived constraints, more space and opportunity to move around and to explore the immediate environment. Brodin (2009, p. 109) goes on to state that those attributes of learning that Sandberg saw as contributing to learning in children also apply to people of all ages with intellectual impairments. This is particularly so if the learning involves all of their senses as this assists learning in this population and utilisation of all senses frequently characterises learning in the outdoors.

2.4.3 Challenge and achievement

Nugent is credited with developing the maxim that "the potential of the individual will develop only to the degree to which it is challenged" (Nugent, 1964 quoted in Brasile 1992) though the psychological concept stretches back further to Vygotsky's (1896–1934) development of the concept of the 'zone of proximal development'.

Mortlock (1984) structured a framework for defining different levels of learning experiences in his four levels of adventure. These ranged from 'play' through 'adventure' and 'frontier adventure' to 'misadventure'. In a similar vein, Tuson (1994) identified the potential for learning in various settings that he described as 'comfort, stretch and panic zones' which have strong resemblances to Mortlock's levels of adventure. Both imply that the achievement of overcoming a challenge contributes to the value of the

learning in outdoor experiences. Pitching the challenge at a level which stretches pupils but is just achievable may be seen as a direct application of Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development.

At a psychological level, the role of challenge is addressed by Luckner & Nadler (1997, p.19) who identify what Piaget described as dissonance, the difference between what an individual believed they could achieve and what they actually did achieve, with this resulting in:

> … an individual's awareness that a mismatch exists between old ways of thinking and new information. It is a state of internal conflict that provides motivation for an individual to make personal changes.

The state of 'dissonance' is overcome through 'mastery' of the situation or what may be described as 'achievement in the face of adversity' in that the outcome is directly related to the effort put in which in turn is in the control of the individual (Bandura, 1977; Gilbertson, et al., 2006; McKenzie, 2003). Those successfully emerging from such experiences realise that they can take on a challenge and succeed so recognise that their capabilities are greater than previously thought and that they do have influence over their destiny through their own 'mindset' and personal efforts (Dweck, 2012).

As has been mentioned, the sequencing of the activities within a programme will have an impact on the learning outcomes (Beard & Wilson, 2006; Bisson, 1999; Schoel, et al., 1988). A crucial element of this is the need to progressively increase the level of challenge offered by the programme, thus maintaining a level of dissonance to make the learning a continual and progressive experience within the programme (Luckner & Nadler, 1997). Fine (1999) used the phrase "optimal dissonance" to emphasise the conditions found when the learning opportunities within a programme are maximised. He considers that the degree of dissonance should be judged when investigating the content of outdoor education programmes for effectiveness. This implies that it is the responsibility of programme providers, designers and deliverers to provide the resources to enable dissonance and mastery to

be experienced on an individual on-going basis throughout the course of a programme.

Rubens (1997, 1999) is critical of programmes which do not offer these attributes and describes them as 'narrow adventure'. Characteristics of narrow adventure are activities which are "high thrill, low effort, short time-scale activities" (1997, p. 74). Examples of these are given as zip-wires, ropes courses and abseiling (P. J. Higgins & Nicol, 2002), as these require little effort on the part of the student who takes minimal responsibility for his or her actions. Rubens contrasts these with 'broad adventure' where the participant is required to make an effort over a sustained period of time. Examples of 'broad adventure' include journeying by canoe, sailing boat, cycle, horse or on foot, with extreme examples being expeditions. The sustained isolation of a 'solo', (as used as a descriptor of a period of solitary living and contemplation on Outward Bound programmes) would also fall into the category of 'broad adventure'. Rubens (1999) points out that 'broad adventure' encourages a mastery approach which leads to a willingness of individuals to take responsibility for their actions, whilst 'narrow adventure' appears to have no such benefits. Due to the commercialisation of outdoor education and the financial constraints on education, the health services and charitable giving, there has been a trend towards 'narrow adventure' as reported by P.J. Higgins & Nicol (2002); this trend has continued over the last decade and has been particularly notable post the 2008 financial crisis (personal communication, A.H.O.E.C. members[6]).

2.4.4 Challenge by choice

Challenge by choice has become a mainstay of outdoor education within the UK and is quoted as a principle of outdoor education in many outdoor

[6] The discussions in emails and at meetings of the Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres (of which I am a member) have centred on the impact of shortened courses, reduced numbers and lost bookings since the start of the 2008 financial crisis, and the impact this has had on the sustainability of many outdoor education centres.

education organisations' publicity materials (e.g. Ashridge, n.d.; Greenpark Outdoor Education Centre, n.d.; Hilltop Outdoor Centre, n.d.; Over the Wall, n.d.). *Challenge by choice* may be seen as a counter to participants' fears that they will be compelled to undertake activities in which they are frightened, and as distancing outdoor education from a militaristic or "boot camp" approach to the activities. The basic principle is that participants have free choice as to whether or not they wish to take part in any specific activity or challenge or to set their own level of engagement. This choice is then respected by both staff and other participants.

In practice, I suggest such a straightforward choice does not exist. I have witnessed overt pressure being placed on participants both formally and informally due to the nature of the programme, the power relationships with both visiting and instructional staff and through peer pressure. Many outdoor programmes expect participants at least to give each activity a 'go' and praise is given to those who try hard, persevere and ultimately succeed despite their initial reluctance to participate. This establishes an expectation of behaviour within participants. Staff do their utmost to encourage reticent participants and this may even go as far as coercion. The role of the social environment and the support offered by peers has been discussed in Section 2.3.1 above, but this support will also put pressure on participants to participate in or complete tasks. The role that 'saving face' may play in forcing a participant to undertake is explored by Ringer & Spanoghe (1997) in their paper "Can't he see me crying inside". Thus it may be argued that the only time on a programme when real choice may be experienced is in deciding whether or not to commit to taking part in the programme in the first place, and even that must be questioned with the pressure exerted by parents, teachers (and other organisational staff) and peers.

It may be argued that *challenge by choice* can increase the learning in outdoor situations as the individual takes ownership of and responsibility for their behaviours and actions. They choose their own goals and criteria for

success. To make the decision not to participate may be a braver action than just to go along with the activity, as described by Ringer & Spanoghe (1997).

The counter-argument to this is that participants might have gained considerably from participating in the activities but have decided not to do so. Under these circumstances it could be argued that it is justified in the best interests of the individual to *impel* them into participation. Outward Bound, at least in the United Kingdom (Ripley, 2012), continues to follow Hahn's (1960, p. 5) belief that although

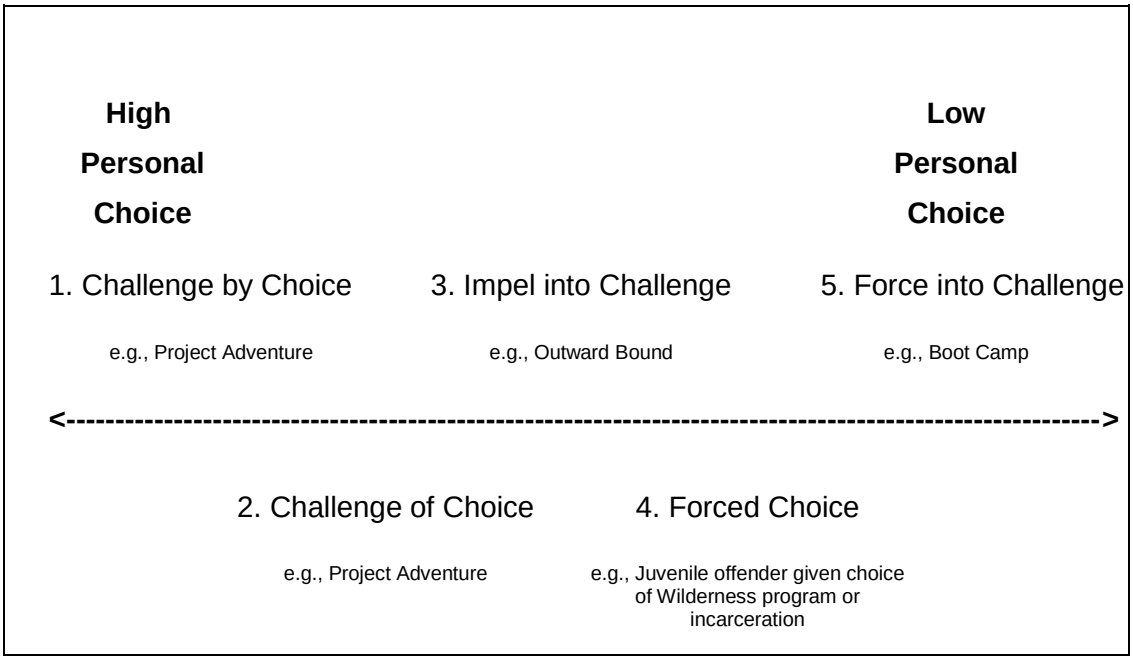
> … it is the sin of the soul to force any youngster into opinions, we consider it neglect not to impel everybody into health-giving experiences.

Itin (1997) states that *impelling* implies 'a force' rather than 'to force' which he considered is a subtle yet important distinction.

Challenge of Choice is a modification to the concept of *Challenge by Choice* brought about because of the above criticisms (Schoel & Maizell, 2002). The choice is now around selecting the individual level of challenge, rather than whether to participate or not. This is not terminology which has become adopted in the UK and I have witnessed instructors from a large UK provider be trained to offer *challenge by choice* and to 'pay lip service' to the principle, without considering how the participant applies this in reality.

Neill (2008) has placed the degree of participant choice on a continuum which may be helpful in understanding the range of options available to those selecting providers for an outdoor education experience. This is replicated in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1: Neill's continuum of choice in participation.



Other situations where the concept of challenge by choice is negated in actual practice include expeditions or situations where there is an interdependency on all members of the group to complete the task. McCulloch (2002) provided an excellent example of these in relation to sail training where the intention of a participant to leave the vessel would have effectively terminated the journey for the other participants and stranded the vessel in a remote location.

Another example involves people with intellectual impairments. If such individuals are not able to comprehend the activity, the likely feelings generated by participation or the risks involved they are unable to make an informed decision as to whether or not to participate. Under these circumstances they cannot be deemed to be in a situation where they are able to make a choice and they will either be denied the opportunity to experience the activity or be denied the opportunity of choice. The situation is exacerbated if individuals also have impaired communication skills and / or mobility impairments as they may not be able to adequately express

themselves and may be physically taken to be included in an activity without being able to adequately protest or avoid the situation (Carlson & Evans, 2001).

2.4.5 Transfer

Sibthorp, Furman, Paisley, Gookin, & Schumann (2011) identified four areas of outcomes which may be transferred to the home environment. These they termed as self-systems, group development, personal values and technical skills. Self-systems included concepts such as self-esteem, self-efficacy and confidence. Group development involved attributes such as teamwork, communication skills and decision making. Personal values included perseverance, environmental ethics and spirituality. Technical skills involved the skills relating to the activities but may also be deemed in this study to relate to wheelchair or domestic life-skills.

Burke and Hutchins (2007) identified the four elements that affected transfer as learner characteristics, intervention design, intervention delivery and application in the home environment. These match closely with the people, programme and process elements already identified as central to the outcomes, as well as highlighting the importance of having links to the home environment and being able to continue to reflect on the experiences once 'home', as also discussed above.

Gass (Gass, 1985, 1995, 1999; Gass & Stevens, 2007; Priest & Gass, 1997) has been a leading advocate of the need for models for reviewing and transferring learning from outdoor education scenarios to the participant's home environment. As new ideas for transferring learning have been adopted by outdoor practitioners, Gass has added a further "generation" to his descriptions, but his theoretical basis for transfer has remained constant. From his earliest writing, Gass has used Bruner's learning theories (1960, cited in Gass, 1985) to explain two ways in which learning in one environment relates to a different situation.

The first is *specific transfer* or the use of “tasks that are highly similar to those we originally learnt to perform” (Bruner, cited in Gass 1999 p.200). Here the skills learnt are being performed in a different context and an obvious example are the ‘technical skills’ of the outdoor activities, such as flat water canoeing stokes being applied in the home environment in a canoe club or taken on to novel situations such as moving water.

The second is *non-specific transfer* or “the transfer of principles and attitudes” (Bruner, cited in Gass 1999 p.200). An example here may be teamwork. Without teamwork a specific problem-solving task may not be achievable and through this the principles and benefits of teamwork are learnt. Back in the home environment the problem may not relate in any way to the contrived task experienced on the course, but the core elements of teamwork may be retained and can now be applied in a very different situation.

Gass (1985) has also used Bacon’s (1983) *metaphoric transfer* as a third method of achieving transfer. Here it is not the skill, principles or attitude that are similar, but only the structure of the situation that has similarities. The struggle to reach the top of a rock climb with the resultant personal satisfaction and the accolade from others in the group is similar in structure (analogous or metaphorical) to many life situations where one has had to strive to achieve and recognising this may engender perseverance to the successful conclusion in other challenging aspects of life. If the experienced outdoor situation is very close in structure to the real-life issue then it may be symbolically identical and Bacon (1983) termed this *isomorphic*.

Metaphoric transfer is considered by many to be the most effective means of transferring lessons learnt in outdoor situations to the home environment (Bacon, 1983, 1987; Priest & Naismith, 1993). Doherty (1995, p. 17) suggests, however, that although

> … well-thought out metaphoric facilitation can produce greater beneficial results … different outcomes are achieved by using different teaching methods [and the]

> choice of facilitation style may depend on the goals and focus of those involved in the adventure education program.

Doherty does not offer an explanation of which outcomes may be associated with specific reviewing techniques, but being limited to only one facilitation method may result in an instructor or programme missing opportunities for development.

Irrespective of the facilitation techniques used, there is general agreement that providing opportunities for reflection is essential for (or increases the chance of) the experience gaining permanency and relevance (Beard & Wilson, 2006; Gassner & Russell, 2008; Taniguchi, Freeman, & Richards, 2005). By providing the tools or assisting with this transfer instructors help the participants or their ability to reflect upon experiences and this contributes to the long-term impact of outdoor education (Gassner & Russell, 2008; P. J. Higgins & Nicol, 2002; Luckner & Nadler, 1997).

Transfer is most effective when there are good links between the outdoor learning experience and the home environment (Outdoor Education Advisors Panel, 2005). This may be achieved through the use of 'significant others' such as teachers, parents or care workers, who have observed changed behaviours or are aware of the learning outcomes. These 'significant others' have the potential to connect the outdoor experience to the home environment and this may assist with any review of the activity as well as enabling them to encourage applying or reinforcing the positive behaviour in the different environment (Luckner, 1994; Ofsted, 2004b; Sibthorp, Paisley, Furman, & Gookin, 2008).

Successful transfer of learning can make a substantial impact on the lives of a participant by changing the way they operate or perceive themselves. An example for people with disabilities is provided through the interview responses conducted by McAvoy, et al. (2006, p. 28) following a wilderness camping trip by people with disabilities:

> An often-heard comment in the interviews was that having successfully accomplished difficult tasks on their wilderness trip, participants are now better able to accomplish other difficult tasks in their everyday life. The wilderness experience provided them with a fresh perspective on the issues of their lives.

If the learning does not transfer back to the home environment then the learnt behaviours on the outdoor experience become a 'one-off' performance, with the potential for assimilation of the learning into everyday behaviour and the resultant long-term benefit being lost.

2.5 Overview

The literature reviewed in this chapter has shown that the outcomes of outdoor education experiences will be affected by the background of the people taking part, the programme of activities that they follow and the pedagogical principals that are followed to enable them to learn through their experiences.

For the Calvert Trust, the client group is people with disabilities but there will still be differences in the individuals who attend the separate Centres. This may include their different levels and kinds of disabilities or their reasons for taking part in the programmes, be this for recreation, education or rehabilitation purposes. Further, each of the three Calvert Trust Centres has a different philosophy of and approach to outdoor education, and a different process for delivering the experience (see Chapter 1, Section 1.5.5).

Although adventure-based programmes have been used extensively for many years by people with and without disabilities as the basis for creating individual change (Herbert, 1996), little is known about what components of adventure-based programmes are most effective in producing change or the degree to which people, especially those with disabilities, are able to transfer learning into their daily lives (Ewert & McAvoy, 2000). Cason & Gillis (1994) considered that the positive effects may be a function only of particular parts

of the programme. Hattie, et al. (1997, p. 70) agreed with their concerns stating that:

> Only some [outdoor education] programs work, and these with only some participants and some instructors, and probably only parts of the programs are influencing [the] outcomes.

Hutchinson & Dattilo (2001) clearly identify a need to investigate further the relationship between programme characteristics and the outcomes whilst Cason & Gillis (1994) and Hattie, et al. (1997) call for further research to explore this issue by gathering participants' perspectives of which parts of the program specifically influence which outcomes.

In the context of this thesis, the research question which is raised by these matters is whether there is any difference in the outcomes delivered across the Calvert Trust Centres and, if so, can the reason for these differences be attributed to differences in any of the specific elements, identified above, of the outdoor experiences provided by each of the three Centres.

This research question will be addressed empirically in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 of this thesis, but first it is important also to review the literature covering the potential outcomes and benefits from outdoor education, as this too is central to understanding the issues pertinent to any assessment of the value of outdoor education for those with disabilities. This review is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3

A review of the literature Part 2: Evaluating the benefits of outdoor education

3.1 Introduction

For the purpose of this thesis a benefit is regarded as a positive outcome arising from some aspect of a programme of outdoor education. The value that is attached to a specific benefit is the subject of a 'value judgement' and that judgement will depend on the individual making the judgement. This individual may be the participant, a teacher, parent or carer, or the organisations which are providing the experiences, be they deliverers or funders. As a consequence this section will concentrate only on the identified benefits themselves rather than on the value attributed to those benefits by differing parties.

3.2 The benefits ascribed to outdoor education

In the early development of outdoor education the benefits of participation were considered self-evident. At that time there seems to have been few attempts made to consider what these actually were or what might be the approaches best suited to delivering the intended outcomes. However, as various authors began to question this premise (see below), and as financial considerations became more prominent (at least in the UK) from the 1980s, a more critical examination emerged.

The identification and measurement of programme outcomes has been the focus of the vast majority of this more recent research but no individual piece of research can be generalised across the whole of the outdoor education sector due to the varying backgrounds or demographics of the participants; the range of purposes or designs of the programmes; the variety of processes followed during a course; and the diverse focus, methodology and data gathering tools used by the researchers. Attempts have been made to

make research findings from differing contexts more generalisable through the use of meta-analyses. The most notable of these were by Cason & Gillis (1994), Hattie, et al. (1997) and also Neill & Richards' (1998) re-summarising of these and other existing meta-analyses. However, it must be noted that the context of the research combined for the purposes of these meta-analyses was primarily North America, Australia, and New Zealand, with nearly all of the 96 studies examined by Hattie et al. (1997), for example, conducted in these three countries.

Traditional claims and categorisation of benefits

Numerous writers have attempted to list the benefits obtained through outdoor eduction and to categorise these into groups. Examples include: Ewert (1989) who listed 28 benefits which he categorised into *psychological, sociological, education* and *physical*; Wankel & Berger (1991) who looked at the benefits of physical activity and identified *physical, psychological* and *social* categories; and Hattie et al. (1997) who recognised 40 outcomes which they grouped into six categories, namely *academic, leadership, self-concept, personality, interpersonal* and *adventuresome*. Rickinson et al.'s (2004) review of the published research into field studies, outdoor adventure activities and school grounds categorised the benefits into *cognitive, affective, interpersonal/social* and *physical/behavioural*. The categories developed by the above writers may be viewed in more detail in Appendix A.3.1.

In comparing the categorisations of different authors, there is sufficient overlap to establish that there is consensus across these writers and that the benefits can be grouped into the following four main categories: *academic, physiological/health, psychological/affective* and *sociological/interpersonal*. However, all of these focus on the benefits to the individual.

Dickson, Gray, & Mann (2008) took a wider perspective and grouped all the above into a single category of *personal benefits* then added the categories of *social, economic* and *environmental* benefits. From a disability

perspective, Dickson et al.'s categories have differing degrees of relevance. *Personal benefits* are of high value to the individual. Changes that can be made on a *social* level are also important due to the impact that this may have on other's attitudes and on society as a whole (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3 on the social model of disability). Obviously any personal *economic benefit* that can be obtained from participation is relevant to the individual, but there is no difference here between a disabled and non-disabled person. Finally the *environmental benefit,* in the meaning intended by the authors, has no specific disability interest (although it may be of considerable interest to any given individual).

Below, the benefits of outdoor education are discussed through the five categories deemed to be most relevant to disabled people. These are the four *personal* categories of *academic, physiological/health, psychological/ affective*, *sociological/interpersonal* to which is added the *societal* category. It is also hoped that through these five categories, comparisons may be most easily made with those benefits seen to be obtained by non-disabled people through participation in outdoor education.

3.3 The benefits of outdoor education for people with disabilities

> Researchers have pointed to the benefits of outdoor education and adventure for adults with disabilities for over twenty years but these benefits have been much less explored (Scholl, McAvoy, Rynders, & Smith, 2003).

3.3.1 Academic benefits

Ofsted (2008, p. 7) recognise the contribution that "first-hand experiences of learning outside the classroom" can have in helping to make subjects "more vivid and interesting for pupils and enhance their understanding" but they make no reference to the challenges that this may present in including pupils with disabilities. Despite an extensive search, no reference could be found in the overall literature to any specific academic benefits from outdoor

education for people with disabilities. That is not to say that they will not obtain academic benefits from participation, but rather that these are not necessarily thought to be any different than those benefits that will be obtained by their non-disabled counterparts. Viewed from another perspective, not enabling a person with disabilities to partake in outdoor education programmes designed with academic outcomes in mind may be seen as denying those individuals the opportunity to link their academic studies with the real world, to experience the field study element of a specific course, and the opportunity to gather first-hand data relating to their course of study.

In a UK-wide study into out-of-school learning in schools, Power, Taylor, Rees, & Jones (2009, p. 440) concluded that out-of-school visits were indeed of greater benefit to disadvantaged and disabled students than their more advantaged, non-disabled peers as they were likely to have "fewer material and cultural resources in the home to supplement their classroom work." Providing these outdoor opportunities for disabled pupils involved considerable challenges, particularly for those with severe physical, intellectual or behavioural issues but despite these difficulties, the Power et al. survey indicated that pupils in special schools were more likely to go on field trips than their disabled peers in mainstream education. This is attributed to the design of the experience being centred on the needs of the pupils, the efforts made by staff to include all pupils and the flexibility of timetabling within special education provision as opposed to mainstream schools focusing on the curriculum and/or the customary use by the school of a particular location.

3.3.2 Physiological and general health benefits of physical activity

In the absence of literature relating specifically to the health benefits of outdoor adventurous activities, the benefits of general physical activity have been assumed to apply to outdoor activities as by their nature these involve

'activity'. How the health benefits relate to people with disabilites is discussed below.

The health and physiological benefits of physical activity are well recorded and the lack of physical activity in UK society generally is a concern for health practitioners and governments (Department of Health, 2009). If the general population is at risk of disease and functional loss associated with inactivity, then many disabled people are at even greater risk due to their already reduced functional ability and enforced sedentary lifestyle (Mobily, 2009). The corollary is that physical activity has been considered to be highly beneficial for people with disabilities as it promotes the functioning of a number of essential physiological aspects and recuperation from injury (Sadowsky & McDonald, 2009).

Physical and mental health

Children with any kind of disability usually have low levels of physical activity and are less active than their non-disabled counterparts (Shields, et al., 2012). Activity at a young age is crucial to the long-term health of an individual as the amount of exercise taken in the formative years creates an 'exercise habit' which is maintained through life with consequential health benefits (Mobily, 2009).

Adults with an intellectual impairment are at high-risk of becoming obese and many require to lose weight (Jobling, 2001; Marshall, McConkey, & Moore, 2003). For adults with an acquired injury resulting in a severe loss of function, such as spinal cord or brain injury, there is a dramatic reduction in the amount of exercise undertaken. Associated with such traumatic injuries are negative coping strategies such as smoking, high alcohol consumption or drug abuse (Mobily, 2009) and these compound the negative impact on health. Most disabilities, be they intellectual or physical, congenital or acquired, result in a reduced level of physical functioning. This leads to a decrease in physical condition which in turn causes a further decrease in physical activity in what R. A. Cooper et al. (1999, p. 143) describe as "a

cycle of de-conditioning". In addition to any 'de-conditioning', individuals with a spinal cord injury also suffer a reduction in their cardiovascular capacity and the effectiveness of their autonomic nervous system is also compromised by their spinal injury (Sadowsky & McDonald, 2009). Thus, for people with physical disabilities both the ability and likelihood to engage in physical activity is reduced, yet at the same time, the need for exercise is increased in order to compensate for the loss of function. This is especially so for those with severe physical disabilities that impair a number of anatomical, physiological, and functional characteristics related to the normal human body e.g. bone strength, posture, circulation and digestion (Compton, Eishman, & Henderson, 1989; Sadowsky & McDonald, 2009; Tasiemski, Kennedy, & Gardner, 2006).

Wankel & Berger (1991) identified the physical health benefits of sport and physical activity as cardio-respiratory fitness, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, bone structure and weight management, and these are the same as the findings for the disabled community (Hall, 2005). Santiago, Coyle, & Kinney (1993) conducted a study of disabled people with an exercise and a control group and discovered that the exercise group made significant improvements in functional capacity while the non-exercise group exhibited declines. Sadowsky & McDonald (2009 p.115) argue that for those with spinal cord injury "exercise and physical activity is not a luxury, but a needed therapy to manage the condition … as a means to achieve compensatory function."

The possible physical improvements mentioned above are not stand-alone but have a knock-on effect into other areas of an individual's life. Improving flexibility, balance, co-ordination, strength and stamina aid an individual's functional capabilities and this may lead to greater independence (Chockalingam, Thomas, & Duval, 2012). For example, a participant in a study by Blinde & McClung (1997, p. 333) suggested:

> Participation in a fitness program has definitely helped me at least maintain, if not gain, a little bit more strength

> . . . it might help me to get up out of the wheelchair much easier. Maybe I could regain some of the physical skills and abilities that I've lost, or at least slow down their deterioration . . . [it has] given me a little more function.

Mental health benefits are also included in this section as these are considered to differ from the psychological constructs to be covered in Section 3.3.3 below. Research has established that there are mental health benefits from physical activity (Li, Chung, & Ho, 2013; Mutrie & Parfitt, 1998; Wankel & Berger, 1991) and McAvoy, Lais, Anderson, & Schleien (1995) provided evidence that these are the same for disabled people who may have the additional mental stresses of having to adjust their personal identity in the case of a life-changing injury and having to live as a disadvantaged member of society.

Christensen, Holt, & Wilson (2013) identified a direct negative correlation between participation in outdoor recreation and depression in older adults in the USA. However, whilst this is an interesting finding, there was no evidence of causal effect. Rather than outdoor recreation reducing depression, high levels of depression may reduce the motivation to be involved in outdoor recreation.

Green space, health and well-being

Well-being is generally regarded as being closely related to health, being a "positive physical, social and mental state; not just the absence of pain, discomfort and incapacity". It requires that "basic needs are met, that individuals have a sense of purpose, feel able to achieve important personal goals and participate in society" (Newton, 2007, p. 7).

Well-being relates to a positive psychology and is seen as a different concept to mental health (Brodin, 2009; Jenkins, Meltzer, Jones, Brugha, & Bebbington, 2008). It is considered to comprise of two main elements, feeling good and functioning well. Feelings of happiness, contentment, enjoyment, curiosity and engagement are characteristic of 'feeling good' whist

experiencing positive relationships, having control over one's life, a sense of purpose, as well as enjoying physical health, are indicative of 'functioning well' (Huppert, 2008).

In the government report titled "Five ways to well-being" (Aked, Marks, Cordon, & Thompson, 2008) being active is one of the behaviours directly associated with a sence of well-being. There is considerable evidence to support this association of physical exercise and well-being for disabled people (Brodin, 2009; S. L. Hutchinson & Kleiber, 2005; Latimer, et al., 2005; Sadowsky & McDonald, 2009). However Aked et al. (2008, p. 6) caution that they are uncertain "whether regular exercise has a direct influence on feelings of well-being or whether well-being is a determinant of regular exercise behaviour."

Both Aked, et al. (2008) and Newton (2007) connect well-being to the natural environment where green spaces and appreciation of these areas are regarded as contributory factors to well-being. There is also a growing body of literature connecting green space and health (Maas, Verheij, Groenewegen, de Vries, & Spreeuwenberg, 2006; Mitchell & Popham, 2007) and green space to well-being (Bell, et al., 2008; Bird, 2007; O'Brien, et al., 2011).

In their study of green space and health in England, Mitchell & Popham (2007) recognised that the associations between green space and health were "relatively weak" (p.682) compared with other characteristics of an area and not consistent once account had been taken of income and urbanity. Maas, et al. (2006, p. 591) also recognised that differences in health outcomes can only be partly explained by the amount of green space in an individual's community.

Other evidence that supports the role that nature may play in terms of recovery from injury or illness is provided by Beringer (2003), Schell, Cotton, & Luxmoore (2012) and Ulrich (1984). However, apart from the Ulrich study it

is difficult to separate the effect of nature from other aspects of the intervention and thus the contribution of nature itself.

O'Brien et al. (2011) made an explicit link between health and wellbeing, physical activity, green space and education and Bird (2007) has described the inherent attraction to natural space in humans as "biophilia" with the fulfilment of this need a potential contributory factor to well-being. Faber-Taylor & Kuo (2006) found evidence of a link between contact with nature and the healthy development of children. Ward-Thompson, Travlou, Roe, & Orme (2010) findings go beyond just access to green space and looks at the benefits of having adventurous experiences in wild spaces. They considered the importance of access to informal adventure close to the home environment but also recognised that children "need access to structured adventure activity and more distant wild and countryside places" (p.30).

Although the activities associated with residential outdoor education do take place in green space, the reported research relates to subjects' home environments. Thus the contribution of a residential outdoor education experience is only likely to be associated with well-being indirectly through a possible increased engagement with local green space following the visit. Ward-Thompson, et al. (2010) regard structured activity and distant wild places as necessary for healthy development and through providing this, residential outdoor centres can extend the experiences of young people and contribute to their developmental needs.

Although it can be seen from the above that outdoor education may be associated with factors thought to influence well-being, there is little evidence that there is any causal relationship between the outdoors and enhanced well-being and practitioners, especially those in Centres remote from the home environment, should be wary of making unsupported claims as to the contribution of their work to health and well-being.

Recreation

Recreation plays an increasingly important part of life within Western society. The stresses of 21st century life and employment, combined with increased leisure time and wealth, has led to an increased need for and opportunities to undertake recreational activities (Driver, Brown, & Peterson, 1991; S. L. Hutchinson & Kleiber, 2005). Participation in leisure activities also help to define an individual by making statements of physical fitness, courage, wealth and social class (Bedini, 2000; Devine, 2004).

Compared to their non-disabled counterparts, disabled adolescents have been found to undertake a narrower range of recreational activities, engaged more in those which were organised for them, were involved in more passive activities, and had a lower level of participation in activities which had a social focus (Department of Health, 2001; King, 2010; King, Petrenchik, Law, & Hurley, 2009; Skär, 2003). The above may be seen as a path to a reduction in self-confidence, narrower life experiences, poorer health and greater social exclusion.

Enjoyment is an essential ingredient of recreation and Hall (2005) emphasises the importance of enjoyment when engaging people with disabilities into any form of physical activity. Research has also shown the positive role enjoyment plays as an essential ingredient in encouraging individuals with disabilities to continue exercise on a long-term basis (S. L. Hutchinson, et al., 2006; Mobily, 2009).

There is also evidence that leisure involvement increases the overall quality of life for both non-disabled and disabled people but this may be greater for disabled people with more ‘free-time’ available (Department of Health, 2001; García-Villamisar & Dattilo, 2010; Giacobbi, Stancil, Hardin, & Bryant, 2008; Sadowsky & McDonald, 2009; Tasiemski, Kennedy, Gardner, & Taylor, 2005). However, Marans & Mohai (1991) found that non-work activities ranked only ninth in importance of the 12 predictors they used to explain variations in life satisfaction for the non-disabled population. Their literature

review identified other conflicting findings and they concluded that the relationships between leisure activities and quality of life were at best “complex … [with] … the role of leisure in the quality of life inconclusive” (p.354).

From a different perspective, several studies have indicated that participation in outdoor recreational activities together as a family can have a positive effect. Family functioning through bonding and mutual understanding can lead to stronger and more successful families (P. A. Freeman & Zabriskie, 2002). This may help counter the stress placed upon family units by the presence of a family member with a disability (Mactavish, MacKay, Iwasaki, & Betteridge, 2007; Zabriskie, Lundberg, & Groff, 2005). Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber (1991) state that the fondest memories people have of their life usually involve family outings and vacations, especially when it involves demanding or novel experiences. These often develop a feeling of “common purpose” and connection that is absent from everyday life and this "collective effervescence [is] amongst the most powerful human experiences” (p.98). Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber (1991) go on to recognise that it is not easy for parents to create situations where children are provided with the right amount of challenge, to introduce them to activities which match their developmental stage, or to plan vacations “that will serve as signposts to the future” (p.98). This is even more difficult for parents with a child with a disability due to the extended range of ability within the family, the need for specific facilities or equipment and the lack of skill in staff at places designed or organised to assist the more standard family unit (Scholl, et al., 2003).

Stebbins (2009 n.p.) differentiates between *casual leisure* and *serious leisure.* The former is “an immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived, pleasurable core activity, requiring little or no special training to enjoy it”, described as hedonistic and pursued for pure enjoyment. *Serious leisure,* on the other hand, includes: “a need to persevere; a degree of effort; self-recognition of special benefits; a connected ethos and social world; and an

attractive personal and social identity associated with it," and results in both personal and social rewards.

Although *casual leisure* and more general relaxation have value in modern life through helping people cope with stress, or providing "opportunities to gain a perspective on life", leisure that is "intensely involving, challenging, or serious in nature … provides the most substantial health and well-being benefits" (S. L. Hutchinson, et al., 2006, p. 221). So, even though the framework of enjoyment in recreation is important, what is notable is that for any long-lasting benefit to be derived from a recreational activity there is a requirement for it to have other attributes beyond just being 'fun'. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) is known for his development of the concept of 'flow experience' and the enjoyment that may be derived from this, but recognises that there is no expectation that all recreational experiences should be at this 'flow' level. However he is nonetheless critical (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991, p. 94) of those activities which

> … respond too readily to market demands and to the mass media, helping to perpetuate a superficial consumer mentality, instead of cultivating a more complex and profound experience.

Relating 'pure pleasure' and recreation to outdoor education programmes, Rubens (1997, p. 74) considered that if an outdoor programme is "made up entirely of high thrill, low effort, short time scale activities … then however much fun the programme may be and however much recreational value it may have, the educational value must be questioned". G. Cooper (2007) raised concerns about the relative value of activities presented as 'fun', as opposed to those having a more developmental context, and R. Williams (2012) investigated these with empirical studies that showed a reduced impact of activities presented as 'fun' alone. In addition, R. Williams' findings from pupils' self-evaluation of the benefits they obtained from structured outdoor education contexts included learning not to give up. This demonstrates the value of encouraging pupils to persist beyond the point

where enjoyment diminishes. Referring to people with disabilities, Whittacker (1991, p. 6) reminds us:

> Let us not confuse outdoor recreation with entertainment. This is not just fun and games, and is certainly not frills. It is the pivotal point of a two-way process, that when used correctly, can enrich a nation by changing attitudes [towards disabled people] and by opening perceptual doors [for them].

3.3.3 Psychological or affective benefits

Attitudes

An experience of outdoor education often features in quotes from both non-disabled and disabled people as being the catalyst for a change in attitude, values or outlook on life (McCleary & Chesteen, 1990; Ruzicka, 1986; Sable, 1995; Wright, 1990). Such changes of attitude or outlook are seldom all-encompassing and to be of more value, the specific aspects of life where an attitude, value or outlook has changed need to be known. Below a number of areas are identified in which a changed attitude or outlook has been considered to have value to individuals, particularly those with disabilities.

Locus of control and empowerment

Locus of control is a psychological concept developed by Rotter (1966) that has been used by outdoor educators as a measure of the extent to which participants consider they have the ability to change the course of events in their lives (Priest & Gass, 1997; Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988). It is measured from *internal* to *external* with *internal* being more positive than *external* (Rotter, 1966). Research has linked an *internal* locus of control to self-confidence, stress reduction, aspiration and motivation, with individuals displaying these attributes more likely to take steps to improve their own environment or circumstances (Hans, 2000).

Personal empowerment is closely related to locus of control and is defined as “an individual’s ability to take control and gain mastery over life experiences” (Rappaport, 1987). In her study on non-disabled university students, Hughes

(1998) demonstrated that people may feel disempowered by the way they are treated in society and this results in a loss of self-confidence, low motivation, poor decision making skills, increased stress and a lower quality of life. Hough & Paisley (2008) found evidence of this disempowerment process in their study of a small number of people with disabilities, all of whom had congenital or acquired cognitive impairments. Increased empowerment is often cited as a benefit of outdoor education programmes for people with disabilities with this increased empowerment associated with control over life events, increased self-worth, higher determination and increased self-efficacy (Blinde & Taub, 1999; Hough & Paisley, 2008; Pensgaard & Sorensen, 2002; Wehmeyer, 1994).

Hough & Paisley (2008) consider that empowerment is one of the main goals of 'adaptive adventure programs' and go on to state that these programmes "have the unique structure to provide adults with disabilities the opportunity to make decisions and foster a sense of control" (p.93). They warn, however, that the experiences must be planned in order to be effective in delivering this learning. When designed with this outcome in mind, Sibthorp (2003b) considers that the greatest personal development from outdoor education may be gained on programmes that promote empowerment. Lawson, Delamere, & Hutchinson (2008) view empowerment as an essential ingredient of rehabilitation, but note that to gain value the decisions made by individuals on the programme need to be both meaningful and informed, rather than superficial or tokenistic.

Zimmerman & Warschausky (1998) warn that empowerment varies from person to person, is situational and can alter with time. Hence the design of programmes to develop empowerment requires more than a simple choice of activity. It must include the acquisition of information followed by meaningful informed choices. This demonstrates that the concept of empowerment is a "process" rather than an "outcome" (Hough & Paisley, 2008) and in this way is more likely to transfer into everyday living and be of greater benefit to the individual.

Self-identity, self-concept and self-presentation

Self-identity, self-concept and self-presentation are closely linked through the recognition and presentation of the 'self' as a person. Through self-identity an individual recognises both that s/he has a unique identity and is aware of the components that make up that identity (Mead, 1934). Self-concept relates to the individual's thoughts and beliefs about that identity and the associated attributes or personal qualities (Michener, DeLamater, & Myers, 2004), whilst self-presentation is the way that the individual presents his or her identity and qualities to others to influence their perceptions about him/herself (Goffman, 1959).

Recreational activities are a key component of identity for many people. For some this may be their overriding identity. This is often the case for those involved in sports (Markus, 1977; Marsh, 1993) and this is particularly so for those who take part at a professional or elite level (Haggard & Williams, 1991). This concept is no different for people with disabilities (Blinde & McClung, 1997; Groff & Kleiber, 2001; Shapiro, 2003; Tasiemski, Kennedy, Gardner, & Blaikley, 2004).

Hopkins & Putnam (1993) consider that an increase in self-concept is the main outcome of Outward Bound programmes whilst Marsh, Richards & Barnes (1986) regard the changes in self-concept as the easiest way to describe the outcome from participation in outdoor education. Unfortunately there is little hard evidence of systematic changes in the construct, as findings from research looking at self-concept change following an intervention have often been inconclusive or contradictory (Hans, 2000). One exception is a study by Fengler & Schwarzer (2008), who reported highly significant positive effects across the whole of their sample in a longitudinal quantitative study. Concerns have been expressed, however, that any improvements in self-concept may be short lived if after the outdoor experience, the participant returns to an unchanged home environment (Barrett & Greenaway, 1996; Christie, 2004).

For most people with disabilities, the inability to carry out normal functions impacts on both self-identity and self-concept for the individual. Shivers & Fait (1975, p. 189) state that:

> If the frustration [of disability] is not to become psychologically debilitating, the individual must accept their disability. A personal acceptance of the self is concomitant with the acceptance of a disability.

Thus to counter the potential negative impact disability may have on self-identity and self-concept, an individual may need to reconsider their values and accept him/herself as a human being lacking certain abilities but recognise that these do not devaluate him or her as a person. For some authors, the reconsideration of values and improvement to self-concept can be achieved through outdoor education (Blinde & McClung, 1997; Marsh, et al., 1986; Whittacker, 1991).

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is used to describe a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value and may be seen as the extent to which an individual approves of their identity, self-concept and self-presentation. Self-esteem involves a degree of evaluation which results in a positive or negative self appraisal and this is referred to as high or low self-esteem respectively (Rosenberg, 1965).

High self-esteem is characterised by confidence in one’s own abilities, self-acceptance, not worrying about what others think and optimism, whilst low self-esteem has the opposite characteristics. Individuals with low self-esteem may fall short of their potential and become depressed, or tolerate abusive situations and relationships (Psychology today, 2012). This can result in delinquency, racism, drug or alcohol abuse, risky sexual behaviour, susceptibility to peer pressure, poor educational attainment, eating disorders and suicidal thoughts (Emler, 2003).

Maslow (1943) suggests that people need both inner self-respect as well as respect from other people to gain self-esteem and grow as a person. Emler (2003) considers that ‘significant others’, and particularly parents, have the greatest influence on the level of self-esteem. Rosenberg (1965) states that self-esteem is developed through an individual's life experiences. Through their negative life experiences, individuals with disabilities have historically reported a low self-esteem compared to their peers without disabilities (Devine & Dawson, 2010).

Outdoor education settings provide numerous opportunities where an individual experiences a greater understanding of their own abilities along with a realisation of their strengths and weaknesses. If a supportive environment is created by the group setting, then these strengths and weaknesses are invariably recognised and accepted by others in the group in a positive way. These other course participants are highly ‘significant’ either as peers from the home environment or are at least ‘significant’ for the duration of the course. Consequently there have been many findings of self-reported increases in self-esteem through outdoor education courses of even short duration and this has been seen for both disabled and non-disabled participants (e.g. American Camp Association, 2005; Devine & Dawson, 2010; Grocott & Hunter, 2009; Lucas & How, 2008; Ruzicka, 1986). Although some research showed the positive effect to be maintained (American Camp Association, 2005; Grocott & Hunter, 2009) or even increased in follow-up assessments (Hattie, et al., 1997), others found the effect to be short-lived (Devine & Dawson, 2010) or required longer experiences to have a lasting effect (Ruzicka, 1986).

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as the "belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute courses of action to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997 p.3) and may be considered as situation-specific confidence. Both people with long-term and recently acquired disabilities experience a lower level of self-

efficacy, either through their life experiences (Allsop, Negley, & Sibthorp, 2013) or through the psychological impact that the reduction in their capability has on their ability to perform everyday tasks (Wise & Hale, 1999). This in turn affects the ability for an individual to develop or maintain meaningful relationships and function in social settings (Harrison & McGuire, 2008) and reinforces their belief they cannot successfully undertake a social task or change a behaviour pattern (Bandura, 1977). These psychological challenges may again prevent an individual from achieving their full potential (Wise & Hale, 1999).

Conversely, individuals who have a higher self-efficacy are more adept at instigating social conversations, developing and maintaining social relationships, and functioning in social groups and situations (Allsop, et al., 2013). Self-efficacy also provides people with a willingness to attempt new activities, effects how much effort they expend in trying, and increases perseverance when failure is experienced (Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy is influenced by performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences (watching others), verbal persuasion and physiological arousal (Bandura 1977, 1997). All these are capable of being delivered through residential outdoor education experiences which have been shown to increase self-efficacy and improve social performance, that in turn have led to greater independence and social inclusion (Meltzer & Rourke, 2005; Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2007). Self-efficacy can transfer from one task to another. This is particularly notable when a performance accomplishment is so great that efficacy beliefs about other tasks are affected (Wise & Hale, 1999). This is often manifested in an approach of ‘if I can do that, I can do anything’.

Outdoor educational experiences appear to offer greater gains in self-efficacy for people with disabilities than for non-disabled people (Allsop, et al., 2013). This is particularly so in the social domains and this is attributed to the starting point being in a different place, thus providing greater opportunity for

growth (Clifford & Clifford, 1967; McAvoy & Lais, 1999), although further reinforcement may be needed to make these changes in self-perceptions permanent (Mazzoni, Purves, Southward, Rhodes, & Temple, 2009). In addition, the residential outdoor experience provides opportunities for social situations to occur with other individuals with disabilities and this may be the first opportunity participants have had to interact with other individuals of the same age and with similar medical situations or intellectual disabilities outside of the hospital or school setting and to make positive comparisons of self against others which may also contribute to the perception of self-efficacy (Allsop, et al., 2013; Harrison & McGuire, 2008).

Therapy

The natural environment and sporting activities have been used for therapeutic purposes for many years. Early references go back to the First World War with the rehabilitation of “shell-shocked” soldiers (F. Reid, 2010). These uses have developed over time to take on a more formal guise as ‘Adventure Therapy’. Unfortunately both *adventure* and *therapy* are open to a number of interpretations and additionally, as a relatively modern construct, Adventure Therapy does not have its roots steeped in traditional professional practice. As a consequence there is both a lack of clarity as to the boundaries of the discipline and the competences required to practice it (Itin, 2003). Some regard Adventure Therapy as the domain of psychotherapists terming other therapeutic benefits of the outdoors as “Therapeutic Adventure” (Itin, 2003; Ringer, 2003) whilst in North America a separate profession of ‘Recreation Therapists’ has developed for those utilising recreational activities for therapeutic and rehabilitative purposes.

Gass (1993) regards all uses of the outdoors as therapy to be on a continuum with the difference being the depth of the therapeutic intervention. He describes recreation therapy often as “a program of ‘one-shot’ adventure experiences” (p.75) as these are usually restricted to a single period of time, with little opportunity for ongoing contact with the clients. The main aims of

these programmes are the enjoyment gained through participation which provides positive feelings, but without structuring the activities to address any specific issue. Gass emphasises that in this context 'recreation', does not relate to "play" but rather that the experiences are "personally satisfying and relevant for the participant". He believes that this approach is well justified considering the limitations of time available, skill sets of instructional staff, the difficulty of follow-up, the previous life experiences of participants and the home environment to which they will return.

Engaging at a deeper level of therapy, Gass (1993) outlines what he terms as "enrichment", an approach which does start to address issues relating to the client's specific needs. Many of the issues fit into the personal development categories described previously such as self-concept, problem solving or decision making, and as such are no different for non-disabled people but here are being applied in a therapeutic or rehabilitative environment. To maximise the learning and transfer of this learning to everyday situations, processing activities, which are common across outdoor education courses, are deployed. These processes include challenge and achievement followed by reflection, with the intention of building self-belief and the confidence to relate to others despite a new (disabled) identity.

The use of the natural environment as a key therapeutic tool has a number of advocates as well as those who are sceptical of the role the environment plays in relation to other aspects of therapy programmes (Neill, 2003b). There is research evidence as to the psychological benefits of nature, and these fall into three main categories. These are firstly, an increased awareness of the physical environment with increased attention to one's surroundings and a resultant increase in concentration. Secondly, experience in the natural environment creates a greater degree of ease at being in an environment that is often seen as hostile and outside the control of the individual. This leads to an increase in self-confidence and self-efficacy. Lastly, being in the natural environment encourages contemplation as there is reduced interference from other aspects of modern life and this

contemplation can help an individual come to terms with other aspects of life (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989).

With respect to the use of outdoor education as a therapeutic tool, Gibson (1979, p. 22) states that:

> …a wide variety of programs exist … [and] … these programs do result in positive changes in the self-concepts, personalities, individual behaviours and social functioning of the program participants; … [however] … there is no generally accepted theoretical formulation for how these programs bring about these changes.

Freedom from disabling elements or attitudes in society

By being provided with the opportunity to take part in activities which have been adapted to remove the barriers associated with a specific disability, the emphasis on an individual's disability is eliminated allowing them to focus on the activity itself. Associated with this, if an activity is set up exclusively for people with disabilities, the participants with disabilities are not the focus of attention for the remainder of the group and can be allowed to complete tasks as independently as they desire, within their own time-scales and without the pressure of keeping others waiting. The removal of these stresses can create a sense of freedom for disabled people which they enjoy, and this is particularly so when this takes place in a secluded location away from the interest and on-looking of non-disabled people (Crosbie, 2010; Goodwin & Staples, 2005; Goodwin, Thusmeier, & Gustafson, 2004).

3.3.4 Social or interpersonal benefits

Stigma mitigation

The stigma of disability is considered to be the major factor that prevents disabled people forming normal relationships with others and thus leading a full life (Barg, et al., 2010; Blinde & McClung, 1997; Goffman, 1963). Prejudices towards disabled people are made up of a combination of presumptions and stereotypes that are compared to the socially established

norms. These prejudices vary with both the individual's impairment and the context in which an impairment is encountered (Staniland, 2011).

From an interactionist perspective, individuals with disabilities are actively involved in the construction of their own identities through their interaction with the environment and with others (T. Williams, 1994). Stigmatised people have choices as to whether to accept their stigmatised condition or fight for better integration into non-stigmatised communities. They have the option to challenge the norms about the stigma and attempt to change the social situation through the mastery of areas of activity ordinarily closed to them. In this way an attempt is made to adjust an individual's negative 'master status' and achieve normal identity (Coleman-Brown, 2010; Goffman, 1963).

Barg, et al. (2010) cite research which identifies a range of strategies which help mitigate stigma. They include: providing information about the individual or disability; direct and extended contact with stigmatised individuals; and the stigmatised individual using compensatory strategies. Barg, et al. go on to state (p.372) that "direct and indirect exposure to adapted physical activity participation is one strategy that has proven effective in reducing the stigma among people with a physical disability." Areas are identified below where outdoor education is deemed to contribute to this process.

Demonstration of ability

Strategies which target non-disabled people's perceptions of competence and ability are effective in reducing stigma for people with disabilities (Barg, et al., 2010) but Blinde & McClung (1997, p. 328) warn that modifying society's perceptions of disability is

> … a major challenge given the pervasiveness of societal beliefs regarding disability [and] … with limited opportunities to demonstrate capability, the focus rests on the disability rather than any ability.

Sport and recreational activities provide one good opportunity for demonstrating both capability and judgment. Research has shown that

participation and mastery of challenging activities is an effective way for disabled people to create a positive impression of their ability and through this, challenge the attitudes of others (Arbour, Latimer, Marlin Ginis, & Jung, 2007; Blinde & McClung, 1997; Taub, et al., 1999). To quote a respondent in Thompson's (2002, p. 56) study:

> I have been able to show the world that blind people can ski and snowboard … basically just get the public to open their eyes to the fact that the disabled can be more able than they are given credit for.

Whilst working with people with intellectual impairments, Latto (1981 n.p.) found that:

> …by taking members away from parental supervision, they demonstrated that they were able to cope with situations and activities that they had never been allowed to perform previously.

Non-disabled people consider that there are more barriers for a disabled person to overcome in order to be physically active than for their non-disabled counterparts. By overcoming these barriers, a disabled person demonstrates a greater level of competence and determination than an able-bodied person achieving the same level of activity. This can create an extremely positive image of the active disabled person through their assumed possession of a range of desirable attributes beyond those directly related to the physical activity (Barg, et al., 2010). This is supported by Arbour, et al. (2007) who demonstrated that through achieving 'exerciser status' individuals with disabilities were rated higher with regard to both personality (for example being kind, sociable or independent) and physical attributes (for example being attractive, fit or muscular).

Arbour, et al. (2007) and Rodgers, Hall, Wilson, & Berry (2009) also state that 'exerciser status' may be achieved not only through the demonstration of physical competence but also by providing information about exercise participation. Thus the 'presentation of self' as an 'exerciser', or adventurous activities participant, becomes important 'in everyday life' as few people will have the opportunity to witness the individual in the exercising context.

Therefore the trappings or other “expressive equipment” (Goffman, 1959 p.22) that associate the individual with a disability to this lifestyle may need to be adopted to present the appropriate “front”, as is the case with non-disabled people (Beames & Pike, 2008; Donnelly & Young, 1999; Goffman, 1959; Robinson, 2004).

This approach to overcoming the stigma of disability is not without its critics. These come from the perspective of the social model of disability. If participation in the activities requires ‘heroic efforts’ to overcome the barriers then this supports the medical model of disability and reinforces society’s current perceptions of disability. Wendell (1989, p. 116) argues that the ‘heroic’ sporting efforts of individuals with disabilities which enable them to fit within able-bodied society has led to a greater division between the able-bodied world and the majority of people with disabilities who are not capable of performing to this standard.

Socialisation

As outdoor education programmes are invariably conducted in groups, and most adventurous outdoor sport and recreational activities involve other participants, or take place in close proximity to them, there are numerous ongoing opportunities to interact with others. This contact, particularly if obtained through participation in outdoor education, can impact on the social aspects of the life of an individual at a number of levels. The precise outcomes are dependent on the nature of the contact and whether this is in a segregated, integrated or inclusive environment.

Common with the outcomes from many outdoor education programmes for non-disabled people, taking part in the activities provides the opportunity to meet new people or to get to know those one has met before better. The context of shared activity invariably creates “common ground” thus generating stronger bonds than a meeting in a purely social context (Devine & Dattilo, 2000; Manns & Chadd, 1999; Tasiemski, et al., 2004). If the activity results in a ‘real’ adventure or in an experience of ‘shared adversity’ then the

bonds which are created may be lasting or require considerable force (of extended periods with no further contact) to break (Beames & Atencio, 2008; Kimball & Bacon, 1993).

Working alongside other disabled people in an open and challenging environment instils a better understanding of other people and their disabilities. If the participants' disabilities are the same or have some aspects in common, it provides opportunities to learn from each other (McAvoy, et al., 1989). An example would be wheelchair users sharing of mobility techniques to overcome obstacles.

If the activities provide experiences for disabled people which non-disabled people may also have undertaken, then this increases the range of topics available for discussion with non-disabled people thus creating further opportunities for social interaction separate from the activity itself (Shephard, 1991; Tasiemski, et al., 2004).

All of the above broadens the range of social contacts and experiences of an individual. In addition it enhances an individual's social circles and their experiences of interacting in these environments thus improving social skills and social integration (Arbour, et al., 2007; Blinde & McClung, 1997).

Normalisation

The principle of normalisation is for the conditions of everyday living for disabled people to be as close as possible to those experienced by their non-disabled peers. Thus normalisation refers to making the environment experienced by the disabled person as normal as possible, rather than making the disabled person comply with social norms. Normalisation usually applies to housing, schooling, employment, recreation and freedom of choice (Wolfensberger, 1972). An avoidance of over-protection is included in normalisation as:

> … overprotection endangers the client's human dignity and tends to keep him from experiencing the risk-taking

> of ordinary life, which is necessary for normal human growth and development (Perske, 1972, p. 24).

Involvement in physical activities, particularly those with a perceived high-level of risk, addresses the needs of normalisation by demonstrating a freedom of choice to participate, by demonstrating that the individual is taking part in a normal range of activities and by providing the 'dignity of taking risk' so removing the perceptions of difference by non-disabled people.

In addition to the environmental factors and the opportunity to take normal risks, for many disabled people normalisation refers to their desire to appear 'normal' rather than 'different' which results in their being treated in a normal way. For some this becomes a high-level goal to the point of such an image becoming of "exaggerated importance" with individuals going to extremes to conceal any disability (Coleman-Brown, 2010). A number of outdoor activities naturally assist in both the appearance of normality and participants being treated as such due to the removal of the trappings of 'expressive equipment' that a disabled person is usually associated with. Without the wheelchair, the paraplegic kayaker becomes just a kayaker and without the white cane the blind sailor becomes just a sailor.

Relationship between participants and staff

Sharing the experiences of an outdoor education course is frequently stated to improve relationships between participants and their supervising staff whether these are teachers, carers or parents (Barrett & Greenaway, 1996). Although traditional roles of authority and power relationships will continue to exist in a number of areas, particularly those relating to the domestic or care aspects, once involved in the outdoor activities it is unlikely that 'staff' will have any superior knowledge and the traditional relationship of 'teacher and student' or 'carer and passive recipient' is likely to disappear (Brooker, 2001; Ofsted, 2004b; Skär, 2003). The outdoor activities frequently bring out attributes of an individual that are not normally witnessed in the everyday home environment (Christie, 2004; R. Williams, 2012). These may include

bravery or willingness to try an activity by a disabled participant or timidness or reticence by those who normally take on a lead role. Such an exchange of positions creates a relationship based more on mutual support and less on dependency which may be more age appropriate creating a greater level of worth for the disabled participant (Rose & Massey, 1993).

3.3.5 Societal benefits

Employment

As has been previously stated, people with disabilities are less likely to be employed than their non-disabled peers and this unemployed or unemployable status, lack of income and greater availability of free-time impacts on every other aspect of life for many disabled people. Hence to find interventions which will increase employability must be key to the improved welfare and well-being for disabled people.

A lack of confidence is one factor that discourages disabled people from seeking employment and this is frequently addressed though outdoor education programmes. Other factors involve the attitude of others, especially those of a potential employer and how they may feel employing a person with a disability might impact on their customers. McCleary & Chesteen (1990) state that concerns over prejudices or discrimination lead to a fear of being rejected which creates a reluctance to apply for work. Their research showed the impact that an American outdoor education trip invloving empolyers and disabled people can have in addressing the negative attitudes of employers (n=18) and thus opening up possibilities for employment in that country.

Whittacker (1991, p. 4) sees recreation as a “stepping stone to the world of work” as challenging opportunities in the outdoors provide an ideal environment to develop many of the “emotional, social, and intellectual skills that work demands” (p.5). He calls for more support for programmes that enable people with disabilities to maximise their potential and for them to

complete a full rehabilitation programme as he believes that this will help people with disabilities to become gainfully employed, thus reducing the cost to society of supporting disabled people. He also believes through the observation of disabled people participating in recreation, the attitudes of the able-bodied community toward those with disabilities are improved, thus improving the chance of employment.

Shephard (1991) states that there is a greater chance of employment for people with disabilities who are more physically active, however, Tasiemski, Bergström, Savic, & Gardner (2000) found no strong support for this claim in their research with forty-five subjects with spinal cord injuries. Nonetheless, they considered their sample to be too small to reach definitive conclusions and accepted that by controlling for other variables and by using a larger sample different results might have emerged.

Inclusion

Inclusion of people with disabilities in mainstream society is core to the agenda of disabled people and the organisations which work with them (Brodin, 2009). This is supported by both government policies and legislation, including in the UK the Equality Act (2010). Hence there is a mandate to work towards the inclusion of disabled people into contemporary Western society. McCormick (2000) goes further, stating that any differences between individuals should not just be tolerated or accepted but rather be seen as a positive attribute.

Contact theory has been mentioned earlier (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.4) and the concept is that having contact with disabled people creates understanding and overcomes barriers that will lead to greater degrees of acceptance and inclusion in other aspects of daily life (Allport, 1954). The outdoor setting is seen by many providers as the ideal environment through which to promote inclusion because of the benefits espoused by this concept (Anderson, Schleien, McAvoy, Lais, & Seligman, 1997; Borgman, 2002; Brodin, 2009; McAvoy & Lais, 2003).

Other writers are more cautious. They recognise that to obtain a level of understanding which leads to inclusion requires more than placing disabled and non-disabled people in the same physical setting or forcing them into situations where the relationships remain unequal or where considerable effort is required to make the relationships fit (Devine & Wilhite, 1999; Goodwin, Peco, & Ginther, 2009; Rynders, 1993; Sable, 1992, 1995). Programmes must be designed with an inclusion outcome in mind and additional work is required to achieve the desired objectives both on the part of the programme providers and the participants. A number of aspects of practice need to be considered to ensure that the experience is positive. These include the staff skill set, staff training and programme design which must cause groups to work towards a common agreed goal rather than individual objectives (P. Hutchinson, Mecke, & Sharpe, 2008; Miller, Schleien, & Bowens, 2010; Miller, Schleien, & Lausier, 2009). In circumstances where all of the above can be achieved then a shared outdoor experience can become a very powerful tool in achieving inclusion objectives, although Miller, et al. (2010) emphasise the important role that the staff involved need to undertake to ensure success.

Inclusion is not always a positive experience and can lead to reduced self-esteem and lack of confidence (Rankin, 2012; Rynders, 1993). As has been touched on earlier, if the outcomes are just left to happen rather than being carefully planned and executed there is a high probability that the programme will reinforce perceptions or stereotypes of disability (Devine, 2004). Thompson (2002) warns of the “excess baggage” scenario when the person with a disability makes no direct positive contribution to the enterprise, or their involvement even becomes part of the problem or challenge to be overcome and he emphasises the negative impact that this may have on the individual. This highlights a lack of ability and distances the disabled person from others in the group, countering any benefit gained through the ‘shared experience’ (Devine, 2004).

Similarly to Thompson's (2002) obsevations on people with physical disabilties, von Tetzchner & Jensen (1999) explain that any dialogue between people with and without intellectual or communication difficulties is likely to be unequal and thus any relationship is likely to be unequal too. Although the more competent person may "strive to overcome the asymmetrical relationship and help the disabled person create authentic messages … [even if these] … are vague and difficult to understand" (p.453), a permanent bias will remain that will affect the nature of the relationship (Brodin, 2009; Pijl, Skaalvik, & Skaalvik, 2010; Rynders, 1993).

Tsai & Fung (2009) found that although most parents of children with intellectual impairments looked for inclusive sport for their children, they dropped this goal after the rejection of their offspring by activity staff and other participants. Underlying these attitudinal problems were a lack of quality contact between people with and without intellectual impairments and a lack of understanding of people with these disabilities.

Wilhite, Devine, & Goldenberg (1999) found that only 41% of people with disabilities preferred inclusive settings as inclusive environments were difficult. Comments included that inclusive scenarios made participants feel they were "not part of the group and could do absolutely nothing" (p.25). The lack of acceptance or ability not to be on an equal footing as non-disabled people has caused many disabled people to refer to these supposed *inclusive* settings as *integrated* as although part of the group, the disabled people remain separated from those without disabilities.

The findings above challenge the whole concept of inclusion as a blanket policy in outdoor education or even in society as it currently exists. Rankin (2012) states that although inclusion is positive, it must be right for that individual at that time. Hodkinson (2010, p. 64), in talking about school education, believes that there should be "inclusion by choice" and this is applicable in an outdoor setting as well. Corbett (2001) recognises the ease and acceptability of including people with mild mobility or sensory difficulties,

but the inclusion of those with more severe disabilities or extreme behavioural difficulties can cause problems for both staff and other participants (Corbett, 2001; Ofsted, 2004a). Even a great supporter of inclusive outdoor education, Leo McAvoy, recognises that there are occasions where it is either inappropriate to include people with disabilities or it is necessary to use alternative models for their involvement (McAvoy, Smith, & Rynders, 2006). Thus in outdoor education, as well as school education, a single model may not provide the ideal solution, rather the circumstances dictate the appropriate place on the inclusion/specialist continuum of provision.

Rehabilitation

The purpose of rehabilitation is to re-integrate an individual back into their everyday environment following a traumatic event. Rehabilitation may be seen as both a process and a goal, with the intention of maximising any residual function to minimise the effects of a disability (Shivers & Fait, 1975). Any service designed to help an individual recuperate and restore functioning may be regarded as rehabilitation (Dattilo, Caldwell, Lee, & Kleiber, 1998).

Rehabilitation programmes using the outdoors originated at Stoke Mandeville hospital during the Second World War with veterans with spinal cord injuries being involved in sporting activities, originally hockey and archery (El-Masri, 2011). Rehabilitative outdoor programmes now look to improve functional ability, increase independence and address psychological issues (Shank, Coyle, Boyd, & Kinney, 1996).

Improved functional ability may be obtained through participating in activities which require physical exertion and a range of movements not normally required by sedentary living (Jackson, 1995). These activities provide a ‘natural’, enjoyable, extended and ongoing session of physiotherapy (Shivers & Fait, 1975). Coupled with this is increased motivation to take part in activities which are frequently considered to be exciting and enjoyable (Lee & McCormick, 2004). In the outdoors these activities invariably involve

specialist equipment or clothing, and in order to participate an individual needs to put on or get into this equipment and this invariably requires problem solving and improvised transfers (Hitzig, et al., 2012; Shivers & Fait, 1975). Success in the above contributes to a feeling of ability and independence. Through demonstrating what may be achieved despite a disability, the outdoor activities can increase the post-injury expectations of an individual and provide a sense of purpose or incentive to re-engage with their previous lives (Dattilo, et al., 1998). In addition, the medium of the activities provides opportunities to develop new friendship groups and a network for peer support through which an informal rehabilitative process occurs. Issues regarding friendships between individuals with disabilities and their non-disabled peers may be overcome with the overall experience providing opportunities for both inclusion and normalisation and through these processes a number of psychological issues may be addressed (Dattilo, et al., 1998; Shank, et al., 1996).

The use of outdoor education for rehabilitation is not without a negative side. For those who were physically active pre-injury, the use of sports may emphasise those things which they are no longer capable of performing (Beringer, 2004). For many males, the image of “heroic masculinity” (S. L. Hutchinson & Kleiber, 2000) may be re-established through disability sport participation, but for some, attempts to ‘compete’ on equal grounds with non-disabled males will emphasise their loss of “heroic masculine status”, thus having the reverse psychological effect to that intended (S. L. Hutchinson & Kleiber, 2000).

Hopkins & Putnam (1993, p. 173) in discussing rehabilitation state that “adventure experiences have been found to assist with the necessary processes of adjustment in a markedly effective way” and they use the Lake District Calvert Trust and Back-Up[7] as an example of rehabilitation through

[7] Back-Up is a spinal cord injury charity which has used the Calvert Trust to deliver rehabilitation through the medium of sport.

active pursuits for people with spinal cord injuries. They note the outcomes reported by participants through post-course evaluations following a rehabilitation course at the Calvert Trust as: an increase in self-confidence; an awareness of what is still possible; greater independence; learning from others with greater experience of spinal cord injury; and coming to terms with the reality of a permanent disability.

The value of taking part in these programmes for people with recently acquired spinal cord injuries is illustrated by the following quotes from Back-Up participants' evaluations on Calvert Trust courses:

> After spending a week clambering in and out of canoes and abseiling down huge drops … I've made a year's [rehabilitation] progress within a week.
>
> The best thing is you get to learn loads of skills [which] have helped me to be more active and independent. It has basically put me in a position to be able to … get on with my life.
>
> I have gained a huge amount of confidence and increased physical ability. I think the Back Up courses should be seen as a vital part of rehabilitation … and should not be missed by anyone with a spinal cord injury.

The role of recreation in rehabilitation is regarded as particularly important for those with a spinal cord injury as they are likely to have been more active than non-disabled counterparts prior to injury (and this was often a contributory factor to the injury), that they will have more leisure time post-injury and they are still seeking to maintain enjoyable activities to contribute to their quality of life (Beringer, 2004; Tasiemski, et al., 2006). On the other hand the inclusion of recreational activities are not a priority of formal rehabilitation teams who for financial reasons need to reduce the time spent in the rehabilitation environment (Zabriskie, et al., 2005). Mobily (2009, p.19) explains that as a result of these cut-backs formal rehabilitation has a habit of giving patients

> … medications to take, exercises to do and tasks to practice and then [they are] left to their own devices ...

> [Instead] they need a lifetime approach to rehab and to practice a regular programme of physical activity for the rest of their lives.

Social isolation is a common post-hospital discharge issue and is often caused by the reduction in the support provided by health care staff or other patients. The opportunity to participate in leisure activities enables people to get out more, be with friends and family and to integrate into the community, all of which are an essential part of their rehabilitation (Dattilo, et al., 1998). Hitzig, et al.(2012, p. 219) comment that:

> Outdoor experiences can have positive effects in adjustment to acquired physical disability and can also contribute to the quality of life following injury.

Acquisition of life-skills / independence

Life-skills may form the basic needs of dressing, feeding or toileting at one level. Higher level skills may involve decision making or personal organisation and on an interpersonal level the social skills required for community living.

Life-skills are a fundamental building block of human existence. They may be regarded as contextual, but whatever the context they are wide ranging and multifaceted covering all aspects of life. Without the skills required to live, an individual becomes dependant on others for their existence. Hence the acquisition of life-skills is essential for social living and forms the keystone for independence.

Despite Warnock's educational goal for children with disabilities of "achieving as much independence as possible" (1978, p. 5), many people with disabilities remain in over-protective environments and are not, or have not, been provided with the necessary training or opportunities to develop their potential independence. This results in a continued state of dependence which is associated with helplessness, a state of need, incompetence or functional incapacity (Gignac, Cott, & Badley, 2000).

Outdoor education experiences, particularly those in a residential setting, provide one avenue where either the inherent motivational value of the activities themselves or the lack of direct supervision from support staff or parents helps participants to practice or execute life skills. This in turn demonstrates what they can achieve in terms of independence, which may not otherwise have manifested itself (Zoerink, 1988b).

Opportunities for improving life-skills may be provided informally through the necessity to conduct 'activities for daily living' to a timescale demanded by the residential environment and with this being different to that of home life - for example, the responsibility of an individual to be on time and appropriately dressed for meals or activities, to make a choice of food, or decide to make a cup of tea. Alternatively the experience may be a more formal part of the organised programme which may be designed to provide specific opportunities for participants to develop skills in, for example, time-management, decision making or cooking, as well as to increase self-perceptions of responsibility and autonomy (Costa, Duarte, Pinto, & Raposo, 2004).

McAvoy, et al. (2006) found that participants with intellectual impairments and poor social skills improved in both task skills and acceptable social behaviours whilst participating in a programme of outdoor education. However the relationship between these was not explored and it may be simply that being occupied with other tasks acted as displacement activity from their normal, less socially acceptable behaviours. Wise & Hale (1999) recognised the role an outdoor education course had in improving the ability to perform activities for daily living in a person with a spinal cord injury, whilst Sibthorp's (2003b) non-disabled participants in a sail-training programme identified that the life-skills gained would be of greatest value once they returned to the home environment. Similarly, participants in McAvoy, et al.'s (1989) wilderness adventure for people with disabilities showed an increase in social adjustment and an increased ability to live independently.

Winbaum (2006) saw the role of risk contributing to promoting independent thinking in people with disabilities. Once an individual has encountered risk in a structured setting and succeeded, they are more likely to risk activities at school, like putting up their hand in class, or telling their teachers about their ideas.

3.4 Benefits which may only be obtained by people with disabilities

The different life experiences, the different starting point and the different expectations of people with disabilities may result in outcomes from outdoor education for participants with disabilities that are not available to non-disabled participants. These outcomes may include: increased social adjustment, increased self-understanding, increased awareness of their own capabilities and an increased ability to accomplish difficult or challenging tasks in daily life (McAvoy, Holman, et al., 2006; McAvoy & Schleien, 1992). For people with acquired disabilities there may also be the benefits of adjustment to an altered physical capability, confidence in a new body image, opportunities to establish new recreational activities and the re-establishment of quality of life (Blinde & McClung, 1997; Hitzig, et al., 2012).

In contrast to the benefits that can be obtained through recreational activities within a family, there are also benefits which can be obtained through having a disabled person undertake a programme of activities away from the rest of their family, as a form of respite care (Shelton & Witt, 2011). A number of outdoor programmes for people with disabilities offered themselves for use in this way (McCormick, White, & McGuire, 1992; Rynders, Schleien, & Mustonen, 1990). Despite the fact that parents felt guilty for sending their child away unaccompanied and because of this wished to ensure that the experience was as enjoyable as possible, they also wished the experience to deliver positive outcomes in terms of the individual's development. McCormick, et al.'s (1992) respondents looked for social growth (social skills and social competence) as an outcome along with cognitive developments

particularly in decision making skills. Shelton & Witt's (2011) respondents looked for opportunities to develop independence, develop life skills and assume responsibilities. Parents saw the respite experience as:

> … not simply a place to stay and play … but one where skills are learnt, opportunities are provided to interact with others, and to gain experiences that otherwise would not be accessible to them (p.25).

3.5 Overview

This chapter has demonstrated that outdoor education may be used to deliver a large number of wide-ranging benefits to disabled people. People with disabilities, including those with intellectual impairments, are still potentially able to obtain all or most of the outcomes gained by non-disabled participants, even though at times these may be at a lower level (McAvoy & Schleien, 1992; McAvoy, et al., 2003).

Many disabled people have had different life experiences because of their disability. This has caused their starting point and their outlook to be different for every aspect of their lives when compared to their non-disabled peers. As a result, the intended outcomes for disabled people from outdoor education programmes tend to focus on those benefits which are at a more fundamental level, as these address the issues most pertinent to the lives of the participants (McAvoy & Lais, 1999).

On a personal level, people with disabilities seek the same experiences and wish to achieve the same benefits from outdoor recreation as people without disabilities (T. Brown, Kaplan, & Quaderer, 1999; McAvoy & Lais, 1996; McCormick, 2000). Richardson (1986, p. 45) reminds us that:

> Disabled persons participate in outdoor adventure activities not for their therapeutic benefits but for the same reasons as do able bodied people - for enjoyment, a love of the natural environment, a feeling of accomplishment and the opportunity to overcome natural obstacles and test their own limits.

Although the intentions for participation may be the same, the restricted opportunities to take part makes the experiences of higher value to those with disabilities than to their non-disabled counterparts (McAvoy & Lais, 1999).

There appears to be a considerable benefit to people with disabilities engaging in exercise. Part of this is due to the physiological health benefits which for a number of reasons are more important for disabled people. In addition, exercise can have a positive impact on both the individual's perceptions as to those things that they are able to do, as well as increasing the social opportunities obtained through this contact with others.

Outdoor adventure can provide people with disabilities with a new found physical competence or a greater acceptance of their current capabilities (Blinde & McClung, 1997) and through showing what can be achieved can change the attitudes of non-disabled people. Participation in activities with a high level of perceived risk often thought to be outside the capabilities of disabled people can lead to the stereotypes created by non-disabled people being challenged and the stigma associated with disabilities being better managed (Barg, et al., 2010; Wright, 1990).

The following chapter will identify the research questions that have emerged from this literature review. The theoretical underpinning of the research carried out in this thesis will be discussed along with the ethical considerations for this research and the issues relating to people with disabilities in particular.

Chapter 4

Research questions, research methodology and ethics

4.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies the key research questions driving this research and aims to provide a description and rationale for the mixed methods case study evaluation research that was used in this project. The content focuses on the philosophical approach taken, the knowledge claims that can be drawn from the data collected, the theories that influenced the research project and an overview and rationale for the research design. An outline of the four phases of the research is provided along with the chosen methods for the empirical research undertaken.

A brief chronology of events is provided here in order to provide context for the development of the research questions and the resultant methodology. It also underlines the tense and voice used in various sections of the thesis below.

This PhD commenced in June 2008 at a time when post-course evaluation data specifically designed to provide a quantitative dataset on which this research project could be based, were already being gathered across all three Calvert Trust Centres. This data collection started in 2006 and although large numbers of completed evaluations were being returned there was known difficulties in the collection and collation of the data. These included problems in obtaining responses from particular groups of participants and from particular Centres, manpower issues in uploading returned data onto the spreadsheet provided for this purpose and issues relating to the value of the outputs from this spreadsheet to the Centre management teams. The analyses of this 2006-2008 dataset forms Phase 2 of this research and this is fully reported on in Chapter 6. In order to design appropriate analyses of this data set I first conducted an analysis of a pre-existing data set of post-course

evaluation questionnaires collected between 2002 and 2005 at the Lake District Centre. This evaluation questionnaire formed the basis of the three Centre evaluation system described above. It was hoped that the analysis of this pre-existing dataset would inform the design of the handling and analyses of the much larger three Centre data set. This study of the pre-existing single Centre evaluations comprises Phase 1 of the research carried out for this PhD and is reported on in Chapter 5.

4.2 Research questions

As discussed in Chapter 2, the *people*, the *programme* and the *process* will affect the outcomes of an outdoor education programme and as a result the benefits obtained by participants. Therefore although it is of value to know the outcomes of a programme of outdoor education, if there is an intention to increase the impact that these programmes will have on participants then there is a need for a better understanding of the processes involved in bringing about those outcomes. Process oriented studies offer a deeper insight than outcome based research into what works in outdoor education (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000; Bocarro & Richards, 1998). A number of studies conducted with non-disabled participants have used qualitative methods to view the processes from the participants' perspective (e.g. Beames, 2004; Harris, 2006; Humberstone & Brown, 2003). Through understanding the expectations and experiences of the participants, providers will be in a better position to deliver their intended outcomes, even though these may not necessarily be those of other stakeholders in the outdoor education experience. Tucker (2003) demonstrated the tension that exists between organisations' desire for specific outcomes and a learner centred approach to outdoor education.

Compared with non-disabled people and with other minority groups (e.g. youth at risk or recidivism) people with disabilities have received little research attention in outdoor education studies. A number of North American studies have considered the benefits of inclusive activities in overcoming

stereotypes and increasing acceptance of disabled people (e.g. Anderson & Kress, 2003; Devine, 2007; McAvoy & Lais, 2003) and the contribution to the rehabilitation process through recreation therapy (Allsop, et al., 2013; Dattilo, et al., 1998; Hitzig, et al., 2012). In New Zealand, Borgman (2002), Thompson (2002) and Harris (2006) have examined outdoor education for people with disabilities, identifying both the benefits and drawbacks of inclusion.

Although the literature review in the preceding chapters has provided evidence for a number of benefits, most of the research relates to participants with disabilities from North American cultures with only a small proportion from other cultures and virtually none from the United Kingdom. Armour & Sandford (2008) investigated three outdoor activity projects (Outward Bound, Kielder Challenge and Tall Ships) with the Kielder Challenge project involving people with disabilities. They used data from multiple sources including interviews with participants, lead teachers and volunteers and also through observations of the activities. For the Tall Ships project, the data on the perception of the benefits were obtained through questionnaires administered to both participants and teachers. This research attempted to identify the component parts of the programme and make explicit its intended outcomes and impact. In a study into sail training, Allison, McCulloch, McLaughlin, Edwards, & Tett (2007) recognised that pre-test/post-test assessments would have a negative impact on the programme and participants' experiences due to the time required for completion. Instead they used a combination of a locally-designed measure of social competence and structured interviews conducted during and post voyage on a one-to-one basis.

The intention of the research to be reported in this thesis was to add to the understanding of the value of outdoor education experiences for people with disabilities in the United Kingdom and to attempt to fill in some of the current gaps in knowledge. The research plans to ascertain the benefits of attending a programme of outdoor education at a Calvert Trust Centre and to consider

the processes that have been influential in obtaining the outcomes. The Calvert Trust claims the same outcomes for all participants attending any of its three Calvert Centres (Calvert Trust, 2011) as discussed in Chapter 1, Section 1.5.5. The variations in the *people* the *programmes* and the *processes* along with the overview of theory and research findings in Chapter 2, suggest that this is unlikely to be the case. This thesis will investigate whether there are differences in the outcomes delivered by the three Centres and if so attempt to ascertain which aspects of the provision contributed to the variations across the Centres. This follows the recommendations from previous research, for example Ewert and McAvoy (2000) who urged researchers to examine the programme components, the transference of benefits to everyday life, long-term benefits, how the benefits come about and why they are important to participants, and in doing so to use multidimensional approaches that are non-intrusive to participants. Few studies have attempted to link which activities are important in delivering the outcomes of the courses, and even fewer have attempted to identify what it is about those activities that causes the change. This research hopes to go some way in addressing these issues.

As a result of the review of the literature, the current gaps in knowledge identified above and in line with both my academic interests and the brief from the research sponsor, a number of overarching research questions have been developed. These questions are both outcome and process orientated. They relate to the value or benefits of outdoor education for people with disabilities and aim to understand which aspects of the programme have been most effective, for whom and under what circumstances. The overarching research questions driving this study are:

1. What are the key benefits (if any) that participants gain from taking part in an outdoor education course at a Calvert Trust Centre?
2. Which outdoor activities are the most beneficial to the participants, and why?

3. Relative to their disabilities, do the participants' experiences differ with respect to the benefits of the programme, and as to which are the most valued activities?
4. How do the delivery and/or the context of the outdoor education programmes and the associated activities, influence participants' perceptions of these?

Addressing these questions will hopefully contribute to the understanding of the benefits of outdoor education for people with disabilities and of how these are obtained. In addition outcomes may differ across disability groups and this study may provide evidence of this. Knowledge of the influence of differing factors has the potential to impact on the lives of disabled people as there will be a clearer understanding on how outdoor education may benefit the individual. The study may also enable programmes to be better designed to deliver the desired outcomes, thus better meeting the needs of both participants and those providing the financial support to enable participation. It is also hoped that the findings should be of benefit to the Calvert Trust in better understanding the impact its courses have on participants. They could either be useful as a marketing tool if the outcomes are those it intends to deliver, or if not, in altering the content of the courses in order to more readily deliver the intended outcomes. Knowledge of the effective activities and the best methods of enabling participants to realise the benefits of participating in outdoor education is also likely to be of benefit to the Calvert Trust in terms of providing a more cost efficient service to its beneficiaries.

4.3 Philosophical approach

People are the subject of any study undertaken in the social sciences. Being 'people', they tend not to adhere to the fixed rules and principles that are found in the physical sciences. Because of this phenomenon, it is common to question the basic philosophical assumptions made in the social sciences, an unnecessary consideration in the physical sciences (McNamee, 2005). Creswell (2009) considers it good practice to identify the overarching philosophical orientation and the concomitant research methods that a research project adopts. This section aims to cover these for this study.

This thesis has adopted a pragmatic philosophical orientation towards the empirical research on which it reports. The philosophical movement of pragmatism originated from American philosophers such as Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey and George Herbert Mead. It was later developed further by contemporary American philosophers such as Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam.

Supporters of the pragmatic school of thought propose that knowledge serves a practical and action orientated-purpose, and is understood to mediate our relations with the physical and social world around us (Cornish & Gillespie, 2009). A key advantage of taking a pragmatic approach to social science research is that the conflict that exists between positivism and constructivism, and in turn quantitative and qualitative research methods is rejected for a more pluralistic and open approach that is relevant to the issues under investigation (Bradley, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This provides researchers with the freedom to use the qualitative and/or quantitative methods that are best suited to answering the research questions at hand, as opposed to being confined to using only one set of research methods that may be restrictive (Creswell, 2009). As the research carried out for this thesis was sponsored by a practice-based organisation for the specific purpose of informing practice, taking a pragmatic approach allowed the research approach and the choice of research methods to be selected to address the research issue outlined by the sponsor.

4.4 Knowledge claims

From the contemporary pragmatic perspective adopted by this thesis, knowledge and reality are seen as anti-representational, which, as stated above, implies that there is no mind-independent truth that one can endeavour to represent (Baert, 2005). Therefore, any knowledge claims arising from the research within this thesis should not be viewed as representations of an absolute truth that exists, but rather as tentative and practical observations or descriptions of what seems to work at the time

within a specific context. On the understanding that there is no certainty about what exists, the validity of knowledge claims can only be tested through the concept of truth by consensus, which involves examining evidence on the grounds of inter-subjective agreement through critical dialogue (Rorty, 1979). Knowledge generated in this way should not be viewed as detached and impartial but rather as reflecting a person's own curiosity, interests and values (Murphy, 1990). Therefore, knowledge generation is only possible in the context of one's own 'life-world' (Baert, 2005). From this view-point, and in this context, it is recognised that knowledge is both shaped and, in-part, constructed by the researcher.

Triangulation is an important tool that can assist with validating the findings in adding rigor, breadth, richness and depth to different representations as outlined above (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Within this thesis, methods of triangulation feature as a central component in the process of generating knowledge. Cohen & Manion (1989, p. 269) define triangulation as "the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour". Livesey (2009) states an advantage of triangulation as a weakness in one method may be avoided by using a second method that compensates for the weakness of the first method and he considers that a combination of different methods can give us a more rounded picture of the subject under study. Denzin (1978) identified four types of triangulation. These are:

- Data triangulation, which uses a number of different data sources for a single study;
- Investigator triangulation, which uses several different evaluators and their different individual perspectives to view the same subject;
- Methodological triangulation, which uses multiple methods to study the same issue; and
- Theory triangulation where multiple theoretical perspectives may be applied to the same problem.

The research carried out for this thesis employs the first three triangulation techniques described above. In the four phases of this study a total of 12 data sets are used to investigate the research problem and to gain a better understanding of the issues. By design, these data sets use the perspective of different evaluators and these include the participants, a 'significant other' for the participant from the home environment, the visiting leaders attending the Centre with the participants, the group organisers (who may or may not have attended the Centre), the instructors working with the participants, the Centre managers and the Centre trustees. In addition the researcher interpreted and coded responses to both questionnaires and interviews and inter-rater checks were carried out on the researcher's interpretations. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to populate the datasets and the analyses also used qualitative and quantitative techniques. The image of knowledge of a subject growing from each of the many facets from which it is observed has led to post-modernists describing techniques that use multiple approaches to data collection as 'crystallisation' rather than 'triangulation' (Janesick, 2000).

A concern when using triangulation or crystallisation is that the different methods or perspectives may provide contradicting rather than corroborating evidence. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) address this issue as they consider that the purpose of multiple approaches is not necessarily to seek complete agreement, although this may be convenient, but rather to increase the understanding of the issue under study.

While different forms of knowledge claims regarding generalisability can be elicited from utilising qualitative and quantitative research methods, the overall claims about the knowledge generated in this thesis are bound, to a large degree, by the limits of a case study design. In line with the pragmatic perspective adopted by this thesis, the primary focus of case study research is on particularisation as opposed to generalisation (Yin, 1994). Therefore, even though some of the research carried out for the case study is quantitative in nature, and may have more scope for empirical generalisability

(Bryman, 2004), the inherent biases introduced by the bounds of the specific case under study somewhat limit any generalisations that can be made.

The quantitative findings to come from this thesis will only be empirically generalisable to very specific populations having similar characteristics to the case under study and would be understood as “petite” generalisations (Stake, 1995) as these are general statements made within a study or particular situation. Qualitative case study research also does not provide a strong basis for empirical generalisation; the emphasis is rather on the particular, the specific and the unique characteristics of the case in question (Yin, 1994). However, there may be patterns and trends that repeatedly emerge from the study which provide scope for more theoretical generalisations. These would involve a reasoned judgement about how much of the findings coming from one study can be transposed onto another situation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Therefore, with qualitative research, empirical generalisability is traded off for rich in-depth analysis and subsequent theoretical generalisations. Stake & Trumbull (1982) introduced the term ‘propositional generalisations’ for those generalisations made publicly by the researcher and contrasted these with ‘natural generalisations’ that referred to any generalisations that are made personally by the reader explaining that from a constructivist point of view natural generalisations were an acceptable alternative open to the reader using their own experience and vicarious interpretation of the findings to make “inside-the-head generalisations (Stake, 1995, p. 86) and that this is often applicable in case study research.

4.5 Relevant theories

The previous chapters have drawn on a number of sociological, psychological, and education-based theories that were deemed relevant to outdoor education programmes for disabled people and to this thesis. These theories, however, did not explicitly inform the research design, but rather, through an iterative process of data analysis, key theories will be aligned with

and applied to the data in a post-hoc fashion and contextualised into the subsequent discussions (see Chapter 9).

Phase 1 and 2 of this research involved the secondary analyses of two data sets obtained from post-course evaluation questionnaires from a single Centre (Phase 1) and across the three Centres (Phase 2). These phases were not informed directly by the reviewed theories as they were secondary data analyses and because of this were constrained by the decisions and interests of the research teams who initially designed and collected the data sets (see Section 4.6.2, below). In both cases, the data collection tools were not explicitly informed by any specific theory, but rather their approach was more pragmatic, focusing on evaluating the programmes and identifying the benefits gained from them by participants.

Phases 3 and 4 of this research involved qualitative data obtained through interviews with high-level informants (Phase 3) and with participants as well as those in a position to observe changes in the participants (Phase 4). As the Phase 3 and 4 research was designed to complement the secondary data analyses of phases 1 and 2 the questions needed to align with the pre-existing questions of the Phase 1 and 2 questionnaires as opposed to any specific theory.

4.6 Research rationale

This section provides the rationale for employing a mixed methods case study evaluation design, in which differing but complementary research methods were used to collect data across the four research phases. The decision for choosing a mixed methods case study evaluation design is first discussed, followed by the overarching research questions that guided the study, and the rationale for choosing secondary data analysis and interviews as methods of data collection. The four research phases that make up the thesis will be discussed in detail in Chapters 5 to 8.

4.6.1 Mixed methods case study evaluation

The case study approach to the research presented in this thesis was largely predetermined by the sponsor's objectives and the funding provision for this research project. The research was sponsored and funded through the Calvert Trust to investigate the value of their outdoor education programmes run specifically for people with disabilities. Although the use of mixed methods research comprising qualitative and quantitative methods is not the most traditional design for case study research (Yin, 1994), the added evaluative component featuring in the research questions (see Section 4.6.2 below), coupled with the opportunity to access a rich source of pre-existing and highly relevant quantitative data, allowed the use of both secondary quantitative data and primary qualitative data to be usefully combined.

More scientifically rigorous research designs, such as randomised controlled trials and quasi-experimental designs, which shift the emphasis of the evaluation element to the foreground and relegate the case itself to being of secondary interest, were rejected on a number of grounds. Firstly, the focus of this research project was to understand in some detail the particulars of the case in question and the context in which it is situated. A criticism of experimental designs, and in particular randomised controlled trials, is that by the very nature of their design they aim to produce objective, context-free and empirically generalisable data (Green & Tones, 1999). Secondly, the naturalistic nature of the study under investigation and the inherent limitations of allocated resources, existing data and access to participants dictated that some of the central pre-requisites for experimental designs could not be met (e.g. the randomisation of participant selection; the recruitment of a control group and the use of measurement pre- and post-intervention). Instead, a convenience sample of existing clients was used and this was self-selecting as all respondents had chosen to visit one of the three Calvert Trust Centres (Coolican, 1994). Thirdly, experimental designs place all of the emphasis on the participants of an intervention and there were both ethical and practical concerns with respect to the demands this study could place on a cohort of

participants with a range of disabilities in seeking a complete account of the courses and their experience of outdoor education. The chosen case study method disperses the responsibility of the evaluative aspect of the course under study across the participants, the leaders of groups attending the Centres and the Calvert Trust staff.

The research questions under investigation were bound by a ‘case’ in terms of the people, the place, and the product involved, which aligns with the key principles of case study research (Yin, 1994). However, as opposed to following a set of participants who attended a single course on one occasion at one centre, this study investigated a relatively large convenience sample of participants, across three centres and spanning a time period from 2002 to 2013. As the landscape of an evaluation is often broader, and more varied than a classic case study (Aspinwall, Simkins, Wilkinson, & McAuley, 1992) the present study could more aptly be described as a hybrid between a classic case study approach and a programme evaluation,

Within case study research the commitment of the researcher is first and foremost to learn something about the specific case (Stake, 1995), and thus, the research is framed more by the research question to be addressed, as opposed to a specific methodology (L. Cohen & Manion, 1989). As a consequence, generalisation is traded for particularisation, with the emphasis being on the meaning and understanding rather than transferring this meaning across different cases. The use of multiple sources of data or triangulation becomes fundamental to authenticating the findings (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). Within the discourse of case study research Yin (2014) identifies a number of possible types of case study that can be adopted. These are explanatory, explorative, descriptive, critical, embedded, revelatory and multiple case studies. The present research could therefore be best described as an explanatory case study approach, as this technique looks to analyse how and why an event (in this study ‘the outcomes’) has occurred, rather than only a description of the case or an exploratory study to identify research questions or techniques to be used (Yin, 2014).

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach which Cohen and Manion (1989) support as a valid case study approach in education research. The multiple methods employed allow a triangulation of techniques, enabling subjects to be studied from more than one observation point and also enabling any weakness in one method to be compensated for by the strengths of an alternative method (Livesey, 2009). This research methodology has the potential to provide a degree of robustness that should meet the requirements of academic examiners whilst also offering both quantitative and qualitative evidence that should satisfy the diverse needs of the consumers of the research report within the Calvert Trust and Zurich Charitable Trust.

The design of this research included four phases:

Phase 1 – a secondary analysis of pre-existing questionnaire datasets provided by the responses from group leaders to the Lake District Calvert Trust and the instructors running the programmes.

Phase 2 - a secondary analysis of a second set of pre-existing questionnaire datasets provided by the responses from participants, visiting leaders and instructors across all three Calvert Trust Centres.

Phase 3 – an analysis of primary data collected using semi-structured interviews in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the expectations of the Calvert Trust programmes from high level respondents representing both the providers and the purchasers of the Calvert Trust ‘product’.

Phase 4 – an analysis of primary data collected using face-to-face semi-structured interviews in order to gain participant perspectives of their experiences and any short- or long-term impact the programme may have had on their lives. These were ‘backed-up’ by a ‘mirrored’ interview with a ‘significant other’ who was a third party that was close to the participants. This provided a second perspective from which to obtain confirmation of the

participants' opinion or from which changes in the participant may have been observed.

4.6.2 Phase 1 and 2 secondary data analyses

As mentioned, the first two phases of this research involved analyses of data sets held by the Calvert Trust. The rationale for using these data sets is as follows.

Secondary data is defined as data that was originally collected by a person or an organisation, but is later used independently for research by a third party for an objective purpose (Boslaugh, 2007). Whilst the Calvert Trust, as the collector of this primary data, had a vested interest in the findings of this research, the secondary data analyses have been carried out without any input or feedback from the Trust.

There are several advantages to using secondary data in a study such as this. It is time and cost effective; it is unobtrusive; it reduces potential problems with data collection; and it can provide a large body of data that it would not be possible to obtain with only a small research team (Boslaugh, 2007; Kiecolt & Nathan, 1985). There are also some inherent disadvantages. These are mainly that the research is hostage to the methodology associated with the original data collection and the questions asked. Particular information may not be included or may not be specific enough to allow close alignment of the existing data with the current research objectives as the data were collected for a different purpose (Burton, 2000; Kiecolt & Nathan, 1985). Often with secondary data, there is a trade-off between specificity and time- or cost-saving. Further, inherent biases from issues such as response rates can limit the representativeness of the data (Boslaugh, 2007) and errors made during the initial coding and computing of data may no longer be visible (Kiecolt & Nathan, 1985). Before carrying out the secondary data analysis, all of the above points were considered. It was decided, however, that the advantages of carrying out the secondary data analysis far outweighed the possible disadvantages of taking this approach.

The Phase 1 research analysed two data sets from the Lake District Centre. These consisted of post-course evaluations completed by visiting leaders and reports made by instructional staff from the Centre. These data sets provided a perspective on the experiences by instructional staff that was not available in Phase 2 and contained data from visiting leaders which although asked in Phase 2, had not been recorded. These post course evaluations contained data that contributed to answering the research questions.

The questionnaire used in this phase of the research (Appendix A.5.1) provided some valuable data for the Centre in terms of customer feedback on the service offered, in identifying the outcomes from participation as perceived by the visiting leaders and the factors that helped achieve these outcomes.

The response rate of only 45% may have been improved through encouraging all evaluations to be returned prior to departing the Centre or through providing a stamped addressed envelope. Alternatively a follow-up procedure to hasten missing questionnaires could be effective, although administratively burdensome.

Demographic data was not collected for either the respondents or the participants. Although obtaining data relating to the respondent would not be normal on a post-course evaluation questionnaire of this nature, the data regarding the participants would have been invaluable to relate the outcomes to disability type and so assist in answering the research question on this topic.

Replacing the 10 point scale used on a number of questions with a 5 point Likert scale that offered clearer definitions of meaning would have reduced any ambiguity for respondents and also assisted with the data analysis.

On the question relating to aims, a free-text field was provided during 2002 and 2003 but this was altered to a list of established aims for 2004 and 2005. This change resulted in a notable shift in the aims reported on the

questionnaire. There was a large increase in “personal development”, “team building”, “independence” and “rehabilitation” (which were all listed aims), with a corresponding decrease in respondents reporting “trying new activities,” (which was not listed but frequently appeared in the free-text field), or “other” as aims. This demonstrates that being given a choice from a pre-determined list may be suggestive to respondents of aims they should be seeking and that the options presented are the full range of responses available.

As the “aims” were identified retrospectively respondents may have been influenced by outcomes observed during the programme. It would have been preferable, but administratively more difficult, for the Calvert Trust to insert the aims identified at the programme design stage prior to the visit.

There were a very narrow range of responses to the free-text field relating to how well the aims of the visit had been met so in these circumstances providing a list of alternatives would assist the respondent and again be easier to code.

Rather than identifying the “most worthwhile activity”, it may have been of more value to ask respondents to list those activities they consider to be of “significant value” and ask them to identify their reasons to each choice. This would have provided greater flexibility and may have been easier for the respondents.

With respect to the outcomes, no definition was provided for either *short* or *long-term*. As this concept is likely to vary across the differing circumstances in the various customer organisations, to allow by the respondents interpretation was felt to be sufficient in this situation.

The Centre Staff’s report was not designed to elicit responses that could be matched to the data gathered from the group leader. If this report is intended to triangulate the findings with those of the visiting leaders, then it could be better designed to meet this need with the questions crafted to mirror those

asked of the visiting leaders. As the Lake District Calvert Trust is the only centre in the group to have a dedicated instructor working with a group throughout their stay, an instructor report on the outcomes of programmes of this nature would be impossible to implement across all three Centres without substantial changes to operating procedures.

The Phase 2 research analysed the data provided by a post-course evaluation system used across the three Calvert Trust Centres between 2006 and 2008. This system was designed by the University of Strathclyde and was developed from the evaluation system based on the Lake District Centre used in Phase 1. The changes addressed many of the points made in the above critique of the Phase 1 questionnaire. In addition there was the inclusion of a post-course evaluation for participants and an alternative report of significant events for use by instructional staff that was designed to make it effective across the three Centres with their different operating procedures.

4.6.3 Phase 3 and 4 interviews

The third and fourth phases of this research involved the primary collection of data through interviews with high-level informants and participants respectively.

Interviews were chosen as the primary method of data collection in order to capture the more in-depth qualitative information required to address all of the research questions. Interviews are the most logical research method for exploring individuals' feelings, attitudes and subjective experiences (Gray, 2004; Silverman, 2005) and can complement other research methods (L. Cohen & Manion, 1989). In the present study, interviews were chosen to explore the processes underpinning the quantitative findings from the secondary data analysis (Bryman, 2004; Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Kvale (2007), the interview may be a measurement tool in both the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms so in describing research it is important to make clear the kind of interview that was used. For these studies, semi-structured interviews were chosen as they allowed themes to

be pursued until an appropriate depth of information had been obtained (Denscombe, 1998). Semi-structured interviews are often associated with a constructivist philosophy (Bryman, 2004) but in this instance they were chosen pragmatically, because they were deemed the best method to elicit the data needed to inform the research.

Phase 3 interviews were with high-level informants. High-level informants are those who are in a position that enable them to be well-informed about the issues under investigation (Campbell, 1955). As exceptional reliance is placed on the responses of one or a few 'special persons' they must be purposefully selected and clearly distinguished from random or representative samples. They are usually in specific positions within an organisation or chosen to be representative of a group of people. Campbell argues that they should also have the capacity to share, in some degree at least, the researcher's "frame of reference and his interest in abstract generalised and comparative aspects of the issues" (p.339). The use of high-level informants ensured the research did not overlook key aspects of the provision and also to ensure that the data gathered related to the outcomes that either the Calvert Trust intended to deliver and/or to those which their customers were seeking.

The Phase 3 interviews were carried out by email. Emails were used for a number of reasons. In relation to face-to-face or telephone interviews, email interviews save time and costs, both in terms of conducting the interview and in transcribing the results (E. Burns, 2010; Foster, 1994), both of which were keys factors in this research. They also offered the possibility to overcome some of the potential biases that can arise as a consequence of interviewer effect (linked to status, age, sex, disability or sexuality), and which can occur when using other interviewing techniques (Selwyn & Robson, 1998; Spender, 1995). Additionally, using email interviews allows the participant and the interviewer time to consider their responses if appropriate or necessary, then allowing further questions to be posed, all of which can be completed at the convenience of the respondent (E. Burns, 2010; Opdenakker, 2006).

However, the potential disadvantages of email interviews are that only people who have access to a computer and the internet, as well as having a degree of computer literacy, can take part in this kind of research. This could produce a respondent bias in terms of age or income (Selwyn & Robson, 1998). Prospective respondents might also be less likely to engage with an email as opposed to a face-to-face encounter (Thach, 1995). Furthermore, written responses, unlike verbal responses, lack the intonation and any accompanying expression which might elicit different follow-up questions and could lead to incorrect interpretations of the intended meaning (Opdenakker, 2006). Prior to carrying out the email interviews, attempts were made to neutralise these concerns: for example, by making telephone contact initially in order to build rapport and maximise response rates and by being vigilant in following up on any text where there was ambiguity to ensure that the researcher's interpretations stayed close to the participant's discourse.

In the fourth phase of the research, the intention was to conduct interviews with the participants in order to ensure that the 'voices of the participants' were heard. A number of writers (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000; Barrett & Greenaway, 1996; McKenzie, 2000) have criticised other outdoor education researchers for the absence of this perspective. In the first and third phases of this study the voices of the visiting leaders alone were heard. In the second phase, no record was kept of the qualitative data provided by the participants. Ensuring that voices are given to disabled people in research into this sector of the population is also an ongoing issue in the field of disability studies (Brodin & Stancheva-Popkostadinova, 2009; J. Davis, 2000; Garth & Aroni, 2003; National Disability Authority, 2002)

Although many of the Calvert Trust's participants have physical disabilities around half have intellectual impairments (see Chapter 1, Table 1-2) and difficulties inevitably will arise with the reliability and validity of gathering responses to questions from those with intellectual impairments. The issues and the steps taken to overcome these issues are described below.

For participants' responses to be of any value in providing valid data, the respondent must be able to understand the question asked and be able to provide a meaningful response. People with intellectual impairments typically have difficulties understanding concepts concerning time, space, quality, quantity and cause-effect (Brodin 2009; Finlay & Lyons, 2001), and thus questions involving these concepts are more difficult to answer. Sigelman, et al. (1981) found that responses became less appropriate as the level of intellectual impairment increased from mild through moderate to severe and that it was simply not feasible to interview people with profound intellectual impairments. In addition, people with intellectual impairments are likely to provide responses which they believe will meet with approval and this acquiescence is more likely to occur the greater the severity of the impairment (Finlay & Lyons, 2001; Mactavish, Lutfiyya, & Mahon, 2000; Wyngaarden, 1981). The latter can be overcome by asking open-ended questions rather than *yes/no* or simple choice questions. Unfortunately, open-ended questions are also more difficult for those with intellectual impairments to provide a meaningful answer to (Sigelman, et al., 1981). Questions in the present study were sequenced in order to gauge the level of comprehension of an individual and worded to provide a combination of both simple choice and open ended questions.

Interviewers who have sufficient understanding and sensitivity as to the needs of the individual are essential when interviewing respondents with intellectual impairments or communication difficulties (Wyngaarden, 1981). The interviewers need to be sure that the respondent has understood the questions and if they become aware through body language or through an inappropriate response that the respondent has not understood the question then the interviewer needs to adapt the questions or ask it in many different ways in order that the participant has understood the intended question (Brodin 2009). The procedure of using simple language in the phrasing of the questions and allowing flexibility in the wording used to pose the question,

maximised the chance of the respondent being able to provide a meaningful answer.

To ensure the responses given were those of the participant as opposed to those of a parent or other support worker given by proxy (either intended or not) and to provide the interviewer with essential information from the non-verbal social cues of the interviewee (Dattilo, Hoge, & Malley, 1996; Opdenakker, 2006), it was decided to conduct the participant interviews face-to-face. Although there are difficulties in translating interviews with persons who use few words but may use bodily expressions and gestures when communicating face-to-face, interviews gave the interviewer the best chance of determining the intended response (Brodin 2009). This had the additional advantage of providing a setting where the needs of the respondent were best understood and met (Wyngaarden, 1981). The disadvantages of the increased burden in terms of time and costs for both travel and transcription had to be accepted in order to gain the significant benefits of face-to-face interviews.

Malik, Ashton-Shaeffer, & Kleiber (1991) make recommendations regarding the environment for interviewing people with disabilities. This includes: a known environment; an absence of distractions; accompaniment by a friend, parent or support worker; interview sessions of a maximum of 30 minutes; establishing a rapport; and carefully choosing the order and framing of questions.

Although it is accepted that the respondent's answers are likely to reflect how that respondent views their experience, Malik, et al. (1991) also recommend researchers confirm the validity of responses and identify possible acquiescence or responses designed to meet the interviewer's approval, through the comparison of the participant's responses with those from other sources, such as parents, support staff or written records. To achieve this, 'mirrored' interviews were conducted with a 'significant other' person such as a parent, grandparent / guardian, carer or teacher who were close enough to

the participant to confirm the responses and / or who may have observed any changes in behaviour. These mirrored interviews asked the same questions as those asked of the participant, but worded from the perspective of the different viewpoint.

4.7 The research journey

It would be difficult to leave the sections on philosophical approach, knowledge claims and the research rationale without reflecting on the impact of studying these subjects has had on myself. In Chapter 2 (Section 2.4) learning theory is briefly discussed with reference to educational theories and these apply to my own learning as well as to those who it is intended to benefit through outdoor education. Dewey (1916, p. 157) states that:

> a large part of the art of instruction lies in making the difficulty of new problems large enough to challenge thought, and small enough so there shall be luminous familiar spots from which helpful suggestions may spring.

My adventure into academic learning has been full of problems and challenges with none more testing than those relating to research philosophy. The complex and competing approaches to reality, knowledge and the corresponding research methods created problems for me and challenged my thinking. My layperson's knowledge of research methods and limited experience in other research situations provided me with some 'familiar spots' that I could relate to and helped me to progress my thinking.

I realised that I had a strong natural tendency to lean towards a post-positivistic critical but objective reality. I also held the belief that quantitative data was likely to be both that which the sponsors and funders were seeking and would provide irrefutable evidence of the benefits (if there were any) that would address the purposes to which the sponsors intended to put the findings, namely fundraising approaches to charities and other organisations, sales and marketing as well as internal organisational management.

None-the-less, I became empathetic to the thinking behind non-positivist approaches and the constructed nature of reality. This was extremely pertinent when related to those with very different life experience, such as the populations that were likely to be the subjects of this study. This was felt to be particularly so for those with intellectual impairments with their potentially different interpretation of the world. I found the partisan attitudes of proponents of the varying schools of thought somewhat irritating, with each attempting to convince readers of the superiority of their methods and that the short comings of rival methods making these research techniques a poor alternative. Hence it was with some relief to discover that through adopting a pragmatic philosophical orientation there was a road that allowed for the different approaches to be accommodated and explored within a single study.

As my research progressed, I became more aware of the limitations of the quantitative methods being used in the first two phases of the research. The questionnaires used as the tools to gather data had been influenced by the interests of those designing the questionnaires. Through this, knowledge was in part being constructed by the designers' interpretations of that which was important within the outdoor learning experience and the results could also be affected by the style and the wording of the questions. The questionnaires provided few opportunities for the participants to explain the value or meaning that the visit to the Calvert Trust had to them or their lives. In addition, many participants did not respond to certain questions or deemed them not to be relevant and again there was no opportunity to explore why this was the case or whether there were other more relevant aspects of the experience.

In marked contrast to the first two phases, in Phases 3 and 4, not only were the voices of the participants and others heard, but also ideas, meanings and the value of the experiences that originated from them were listened to and explored. This provided a far greater understanding of the benefits from the programme for these people. It also revealed a number of benefits for these

participants that had not been considered to be of as much importance to myself, as a provider with many years experience, however, these were obviously of importance to the participants and their families.

My reflection on the above learning from my undertaking this research has made me consider how I would conduct this research if I was in possession of the knowledge that I have subsequently obtained. If I were to carry out this study now, I would try to understand the whole experience through the eyes of the participants as the primary perspective, attempting to gain a greater in-depth understanding of the individual's expectations from the experience and those issues that have at least in part contributed to these expectations. I would wish to explore how these expectations may be understood by those planning or booking the visit, and how the organiser's agenda is combined with the participants' expectations. I would wish to understand how these are then framed and how they are passed on to the Centre and then explained to those designing and delivering the programme. To observe the delivery of the programme and discover how the programme outcomes are interpreted by both the participants and those accompanying them, would add to the understanding of how outdoor education has worked (or otherwise) for those being studied. Finally to observe the participants returning to their home environment and the changes that may have come about and how durable these may be, would be of interest as this would reveal the impact that the experience may have on the life of an individual. Ideally this final stage would also include the impact the experience may have on others from the home environment in terms of their attitude towards the participant and changes to their expectations about what may be achieved. If this phase could explore the wider community than the individual's immediate family, then this could also be of benefit in understanding how these outdoor experiences could impact on society as a whole.

4.8 Ethics

The secondary data analyses carried out in Phases 1 and 2 required ethics approval at Level 1 as this was “straightforward non-intervention, observational research (e.g. analysis of archived data) (University of Edinburgh Education Ethics Commitee, 2008) with approval being granted by my academic supervisors. For Phases 3 and 4 of this study, ethics approval was required at Level 2 as these phases involved “atypical participant groups [with] ethical issues [that] might require more detailed consideration but were unlikely to prove problematic” (University of Edinburgh Education Ethics Commitee, 2008). The British Psychological Society ethical guidelines (British Psychological Society, 2009) were used as a basis for the ethical procedures and ethics approval was obtained from the University of Edinburgh Education Ethics Commitee, before commencement of the research (see Appendix A.4.1) and the University of Edinburgh procedures were followed at all times for the handling and security of data. The ethical considerations included the requirement for participants to be informed about the research, that they had consented to be involved, that there would be confidentiality in their identity, and that information gathered would not be used for any other purposes.

In this research, many of the respondents had intellectual disabilities, and because of this, specific issues arose. The issues and the protocols adopted to overcome these are discussed below.

4.8.1 Considerations for participants with intellectual impairments

In research and in contemporary society children are regarded as competent social actors, capable of contributing to decision-making concerning their own lives. It is appropriate that their voices should be heard in both research and in decisions which affect their lives (Brodin & Stancheva-Popkostadinova 2009; Coyne, 2010). Within the social model of disability and contemporary

society, the same must, as far as possible, be deemed applicable to those with intellectual impairments.

Three factors are required for valid consent: information, competence and voluntary agreement (Collier, 1998; S. Oliver & Oliver, 2001b). The information provided on the research, why it is being conducted and what will be done with the data has to be relevant, sufficient and complete in order for the individual to be able to make an informed decision on participation. The individual giving consent must also be competent not only to understand the information provided but also competent to make a decision on whether to participate or not, based on that information. Competence requirements may vary in relation to the type of participation requested (e.g. to take part in an interview, to complete a questionnaire) and the level and complexity of any potential risks of participation but the quality of the decision (i.e. whether a third party considers the decision made is deemed to be a good or bad one) is not necessarily any reflection on an individual's competence to make that decision. It is also important to establish that consent, when given, is truly voluntary, taking into account the context in which it is sought, any pre-existing relationship between researcher and potential participants, and, as far as is possible, taking due cognisance of the role of any proxy involvement in the consent process.

To fulfil these requirements it would be essential that all three areas were considered in recruiting participants to all four stages in this research, with particular caution exercised when seeking the voluntary participation of children and/or individuals with intellectual disabilities. Firstly it was important that participants were provided with information in a way that they could best understand the research and its aims. This meant that the information at times needed to be adapted for the individual in order to be intellectually appropriate. Secondly, all potential participants had to be deemed competent both to understand the information provided and to make a decision on whether to take part or not in the research. It was extremely difficult in the short time scales available to make such a dual assessment in the case of

younger participants and those with intellectual disabilities. In many cases the view of parents or carers had to be accepted but this in effect meant that a proxy view of the respondent's willingness to take part in the research had also to be accepted and that there had been no pressure, direct or indirect, put on them to do so. Again this was difficult to assess and a degree of trust had to be assumed. As an additional precaution, however, in the Phase 4 face-to-face interviews, respondents were provided with a verbal version of the information and asked to reconfirm verbally their consent. This provided a repeat opportunity to share the information, assess comprehension and obtain voluntary consent (S. Oliver & Oliver, 2001a).

The use of proxies can be helpful in establishing the understanding or wishes of someone with intellectual impairments and those closest to the individual are most likely to best understand the individual, their needs and wishes. Unfortunately, even close relatives do not always accurately reflect the wishes of an individual as they are influenced by their own interests or values (Collier, 1998; Coyne, 2010). Coyne points out that although meant as a well-intentioned safeguard to protect children and other vulnerable people who are deemed incapable of adequately evaluating the benefits and risks of participation, the need for parental, teacher, carer or other 'gatekeeper' consent may well restrict children's ability to participate voluntarily in research or other activities. In addition there is an untested assumption that these gatekeepers possess the competences to make such an evaluation and are representing the individual's wishes or best interests.

With respect to responding to research questions the use of proxies may also jeopardise the internal validity of the research. If the proxy acts as an intermediary, it is possible that the response conveyed reflects his or her own opinion rather than their perceived views of the intended respondent, and in either case this may or may not be in alignment with the participant's own views or opinions.

4.8.2 Consent

The process of considering consent from an academic research standpoint in Phases 3 and 4 of this study (described above), raised concerns over the level of consent that had been obtained from the participants for the secondary data to be analysed in the first two phases. The concern focuses on the lack of explanation given as to the purpose of the questionnaires to respondents (i.e. course leaders, family members or participants) and the uses to which the data might be put.

Evaluation questionnaires of this nature are frequently encountered in many aspects of life and their purpose is to a large degree self-evident from the questions being asked, although this may not necessarily be so apparent to those with intellectual impairments. In Phase 1 the evaluation questionnaires were given to course leaders and so invariably completed by competent adults who would have had an understanding of their purpose. In Phase 2, when questionnaires were administered to participants, greater care should have been taken to explain their purpose and to obtain informed consent as many participants had intellectual impairments and would not have been aware as to the intended use of the data being gathered. To help address this concern all Phase 2 data have been collapsed by group and used only as part of a large scale evaluation, with anonymity of individual responses being ensured.

For Phase 3 (email interviews with high-level informants), information regarding the research was provided and written consent was obtained from all participants (see Appendix A.4.1), as this was felt appropriate in research that was conducted in a written format with competent adults. This consent was provided electronically with identification linked to the personal email address from which it had been returned.

In Phase 4, which involved interviews with participants, verbal consent was obtained which was recorded and filed electronically (see Appendix A.8.5). If

the participant was under 18, then additional consent was obtained from a parent or other person acting *in loco parentis* (Appendix A.8.2).

Consent for the 'significant other' interviews was obtained verbally prior to the commencement of the interview and this was recorded and filed electronically. Written details of the research, the consent and the complaints procedure was either provided in advance of the interviews, if requested, or left behind on completion.

4.8.3 Participant confidentiality

Standard research practice demands that individuals participating in research need to be protected from identification. However, people with disabilities and their families are often easily identified, particularly by professionals working in the field, especially if an individual has an unusual condition, attends a special school or lives in a small community (Brodin & Renblad 2000).

To address this concern, minimal personal data were included in the reporting of the research findings and this was strictly limited to only those data that were considered relevant to the point being made.

4.8.4 Protection of children and vulnerable adults

All participants who were children, as well as those who were regarded as vulnerable due to the nature of their disability, were accompanied during the interview process by a parent, guardian, teacher or other professional who had some level of responsibility for the care of that individual.

In addition to protecting both the individual from possible abuse and the interviewer from any accusation, when interviewing children and people with intellectual impairments or speech impediments, the respondents being accompanied by someone with close personal knowledge of the individual helped ensure that the most appropriate approach was adopted to ensure that the interview process was explained, consent was acquired and the questions were understood to the best of that individual's capabilities. This

also increased the likelihood that the responses recorded reflected the individual's feelings and intended meaning.

4.8.5 Data protection

Phase 1 and 2 questionnaire data had been collected by the Calvert Trust for their uses and secured in accordance with their policies and their registration under the Data Protection Act. For Phase 1 of this research, the secondary analysis of these data involved their transcription onto spread-sheets and this was done without reference to any individual's identity. For Phase 2, this level of transcription had previously been done by the Calvert Trust and electronic copies of these files were obtained. These datasets did not include the identity of any individual.

The electronic data for the above phases, when held away from the Calvert Trust were stored in files that were password protected. This same protocol as used for the data in Phases 3 and 4, with any paper copies kept in secure file storage.

4.8.6 Conflict of interests

As outlined in Chapter 1, before undertaking this research, I had previously worked for the Calvert Trust for 17 years, and this created an ethical issue through potential conflict of interests. As this research was sponsored by the Calvert Trust and funded by one of their major benefactors, Zurich Community Trust both the Calvert Trust and Zurich had an interest in the results, as positive findings could have the potential to increase revenue to either charity by providing supporting evidence for both its fundraising and marketing activities.

Both parties with a financial interest in this research were fully aware of this potential conflict of interests and were committed to this research being carried out in a sensitive but objective manner, as guided by my academic supervisors. Both Zurich Community Trust and the Calvert Trust expressed the opinion that even negative findings would be of value to them as these

could influence the future strategy of the organisations, potentially modifying their fund-giving and funding requirements respectively.

Chapter 5

Phase 1: Post-course evaluations of the Lake District Calvert Trust

5.1 Introduction

The first phase of this research utilised two archived data sets held by the Lake District Calvert Trust Centre. The data had been derived from post-course evaluation questionnaires completed by visiting leaders and from post-course reports completed by the instructional staff leading the groups of visitors. These questionnaires and reports formed part of the Centre's customer feedback and instructor record keeping systems, with the information being used internally to evaluate and make improvements to the quality of the service provided.

The data used in this first phase of the research had been collected over four years from the beginning of 2002 to the end of 2005. Prior to 2002, the post-course evaluation questionnaires used different response formats on a number of the questions. After 2005 a new evaluation system was introduced and the analysis of the data generated by the replacement system was the subject of Phase 2 of this research, which is discussed in the next chapter.

Although the data used in this phase of the research had been used regularly for evaluation purposes by the Centre, an in-depth analysis of the data sets had not been undertaken due to the lack of staff resource. Secondary analyses of these extensive data sets were considered to be a useful starting point in answering some of the research questions outlined in the preceding chapter and were also considered to be of potential value in informing the design of later stages of the research.

Prior to the analyses commencing, consent was gained from the Calvert Trust to access the data and the University of Edinburgh ethical guidelines

were followed in relation to all handling of these data, as discussed in Chapter 4.

5.2 Design and procedures

This section describes: the design and procedures that were undertaken; the participants involved; the research tools used; and the analyses that were carried out within this phase of the research.

5.2.1 Post-course evaluation by visiting staff

As indicated above, the purpose of this post-course evaluation questionnaire had been to obtain feedback from customers on the outdoor education courses run by the Lake District Calvert Trust with a view to using this information to inform improvements and to underpin any changes to the provision on offer deemed necessary on the basis of this feedback.

Design

At the time the primary data were collected, I was the Centre Director for the Lake District Calvert Trust and had designed these evaluation forms. My personal interest in the outcomes of outdoor education, particularly for people with disabilities, combined with a desire to better understand the factors that contributed to delivering those outcomes, had caused me to include questions on the evaluation forms which tapped into these issues. These questions would not normally be found on evaluations designed to assess the quality of provision alone. I was looking for evidence that would be of value in improving the design of the Centre's outdoor programmes and the learning processes within them so that they better enabled participants to obtain the intended learning outcomes from their visit. In addition, this information was likely to be of use to both marketing and fundraising activities within the organisation.

Prior to first use, the questionnaire was piloted for face validity with a stratified sample of visiting leaders (n=10) representative of the range of

courses offered by the Centre and of visiting disability groups (L. Cohen & Manion, 1989). The Lake District Calvert Trust instructional staff (n=11) and representatives from other departments (n=4) were also invited to comment on the content and suitability of questions in terms of obtaining measure of the various aspects of the Centre's provision. Following this piloting and consultation minor amendments were made to the questionnaire.

Respondents

The leaders of the visiting groups had been chosen as the evaluation respondents as it was considered that:

- They would be aware of the aims and objectives of the visit for the participants.

- Their knowledge of the participants both before and after the visit put them in a position where they could not only observe the effects of the intervention (the visit) but also any consequent or subsequent changes in the behaviour of the participants. This provided a naturally occurring pre- and post-intervention perspective.

- They were the economic purchaser of the visit, or their representative. As such they would be involved (or have a degree of influence over) the decision as to the type of visit undertaken and the choice of provider. In this role their views on the quality of the provision and the programme's effectiveness in delivering the desired outcomes were of paramount importance to any in-house evaluation.

- They would be expecting to provide feedback and may also have been undertaking an evaluation of the programme for their own organisation.

- Using visiting leaders would avoid any difficulties in communicating with participants with intellectual impairments or communication difficulties. Visiting leaders would also be in a good position to

represent the interests of any participants who would not easily be able to respond themselves.

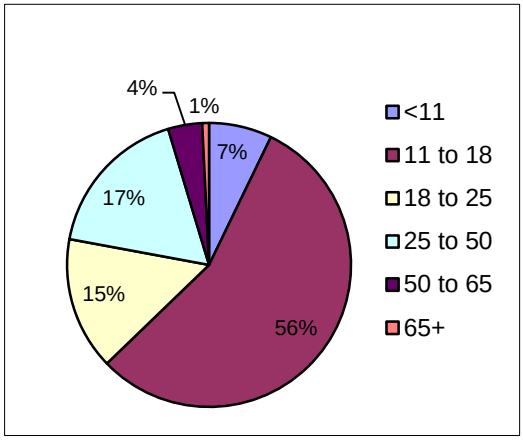
The post-course evaluation questionnaires were distributed on the final day of the visit to the leaders of every activity group (n=1,116) run by the Centre between 2002 and 2005. Respondents were given the choice of anonymity and could either leave the completed questionnaire in the Centre before their departure or take it away for completion at a later stage and return it by post (a stamped addressed envelope was not provided and a record was not maintained as to the number of postal returns). The leaders from 186 different organisations and 66 family groups returned a total of 502 questionnaires which gave a response rate of 45%. Many organisations had large numbers of participants which were split into smaller activity groups with the leader of each activity group provided with a separate questionnaire for completion so as to reflect the experiences of their specific group. All of the returned evaluations were included in the analyses with the exception of one as this was for a repeat visit by the same group with the same participants and had been completed by the same leader.

The returned evaluations related to 2,843 participants with disabilities accompanied by 1,492 people without disabilities. The latter were teachers, teaching assistants, care workers or buddies[8]. The ages and disabilities of the participants to which the evaluations referred to are shown in Figure 5.1 & Figure 5.2 respectively. A large majority of participants (79%) had congenital disabilities, with the remaining 21% having acquired disabilities. Two thirds of participants (64%) were male and this was consistent across all the age ranges. These profiles were in line with the overall population attending the Centre over this 4 year period and therefore there should be no

[8] Buddy is a term used for someone who has no formal role in the disabled person's everyday life, but who, for the purposes of running a physically demanding course in the outdoors and in an unfamiliar domestic / social environment, is available to provide limited support when or if required. Buddies have no direct association with the Calvert Trust or its staff.

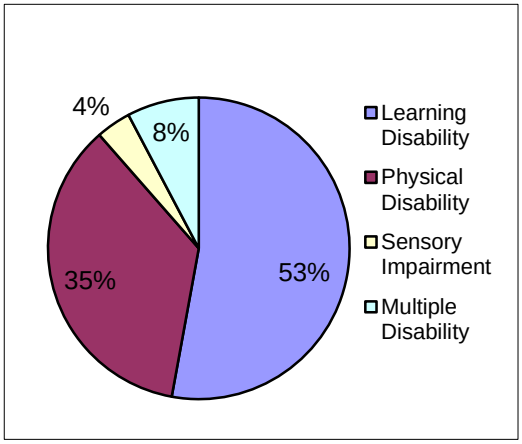
discernible bias on demographic grounds caused by the study sample. No data were collected regarding the leader's sex or age.

Figure 5.1: Age of participants



Source: Phase 1 Excel 2002-5 compilation

Figure 5.2: Disability of participants



Source: Phase 1 Excel 2002-5 compilation

In terms of customer sector, 43% of the questionnaire returns were made by leaders from educational establishments who accounted for approximately 40% of the Centre's use (by both head-count and bed-night[9] occupancy) over the period under review. Seventeen percent of the returns were made by leaders from rehabilitation organisations that made up 28% of the Centre's use, and 40% of returns were from recreational participants who accounted for 31% of the overall Centre use. The bias towards recreational users was caused by the smaller booking units (families and individuals) and thus a higher number of questionnaires had been distributed to this customer sector. Where possible, this potential source of bias in the data set was moderated by the use of percentages in the descriptive statistics.

[9] Bed-night occupancy is the management measure of Centre utilisation employed by the Calvert Trust and hence many of the available management statistics were measured in "bed-nights".

Measurement tools

All of the questions that featured on the visiting leader's evaluation questionnaire were deemed relevant to the research aims of this thesis and were included in the study. These questions focussed on: the quality of the provision; the aims of the visit; whether the aims were met; the factors that helped/prevented aims being achieved; the most and least worthwhile activities; and the perceived short-term and long-term benefits of the visit. The 10 questions regarding the quality of provision were closed response questions requiring rating from 1 to 10 where 10 was high. One question regarding the aims for the course required a categorical, closed response with a free-text option; and the remaining seven questions were free-text responses (see Appendix A.5.1).

Analyses

The visiting leader evaluation data were analysed using Excel software. The analysis was descriptive and provided the average ratings for each of the 10 provision-related questions that had been rated between 1 and 10. The free-text responses were coded into categorical data for each question using a form of content analysis. As described by Gillan (2000), the aim was to categorise substantive statements into simple headings. Each question was analysed separately and the answers were coded into common categories. Once the data had been categorised, an inter-coder reliability check was carried out with two fellow PhD students in order to increase the validity of the findings (Bryman, 2004). Each coder was given a random sample of the transcribed reports and a list of the tentative codes. The coders were asked to identify and assign the substantive statements into the relevant codes. Once this process was complete the analyses from each coder were compared. Only codes that were identified by two out of the three coders were included in the final coding scheme and in some cases, slight modifications were made to the phrasing of the codes.

The data were examined to determine whether differences existed across a number of attributes that were considered to be antecedent factors and

thus a possible influential factor in determining outcomes, as discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2. These comprised of age (children or adults), disability category (physical, intellectual, sensory or multiple disabilities), whether the disability was congenital or acquired and the customer sector (educational, rehabilitation or recreation) of the participants.

5.2.2 Post-course reports by instructional staff

The purpose of the instructor's post-course reports was to encourage the instructional staff to reflect on their practice as well as to obtain information on both the problems and successful elements in running courses for specific disability groups and individual customers.

Design

The instructor reports had been designed in conjunction with the instructors. Inputs were made from other departments to ensure the most pertinent information was gathered to assist with improving the programmes, the facilities and the quality of the visitors' experience.

Respondents

An instructor was allocated to run the programme for each activity group. This 'lead' instructor was responsible for the completion of this post-course report. Between 2002 and 2005, 1,116 activity groups were run with 703 instructor reports (63%) available on file.

The profile of the staff completing the reports was representative of the overall staff cohort in terms of experience in the outdoor field, experience in working with people with disabilities, seniority in the Centre, sex and age. A degree of bias was detected with a reduced number of reports having been completed by the less experienced staff and this was attributed to their being qualified to run only some of the courses on offer at the Centre. A further bias was detected in that specific instructors appeared to have been more conscientious than others in completing their paperwork and so generating a greater number of reports.

Measurement tools

The pro forma of instructor reports requested demographic information relating to the whole group, the aims and objectives of the visit and the domestic requirements required to meet the needs of participants. In relation to the programme, a diary of activities undertaken along with comments as to their success, unplanned events and any personal development or learning for the visitors or Centre staff (see Appendix A.5.2). All the questions had free-text responses and the instructors were provided with time immediately post the visitor's departure to complete this report.

Analyses

A content analysis was conducted on the free-text fields using the same coding categories employed in analysis of the visiting leader evaluations. An inter-coder reliability check was also conducted as described above. Excel software was used to record the results which were analysed using descriptive statistics.

5.2.3 Comparative analyses of leader and staff evaluations

Once the analysis of the post-course questionnaires and the post-course reports had been undertaken, a final overarching analysis was carried out to compare these two data sets to identify any commonalities or differences between visiting leaders and instructional staff in the perceptions of course outcomes and participant experiences.

The instructor reports were paired with the corresponding visiting leader evaluations for the same group of participants. Due to the anonymity of some of the visiting leader evaluations and missing reports from instructors it was not possible to match up both the leader evaluations and instructor report for every course in this period. Only those reports that could be identified as relating to a course for which the visiting leader had also completed an evaluation questionnaire were included in the study. This reduced the matched sample to 193 reports or 17% of the activity groups run between 2002 and 2005 at the Centre. Despite this attrition rate, a

potentially rich dataset of interlinking evaluations remained available for analysis.

The comparison of these data sets was descriptive and involved three core research questions focussing on any observed personal developments of participants, those activities that were most successful or unsuccessful, and on the reasons for the success or failure of these activities.

5.3 Results

5.3.1 Quality of provision

The questions relating to the quality of provision were divided into four broad areas of the service: administration, accommodation, catering and activities. Respondents (n=502) were asked to score each of these aspects of the provision out of 10. Table 5.1 shows the mean scores of the ten rated aspects of the service.

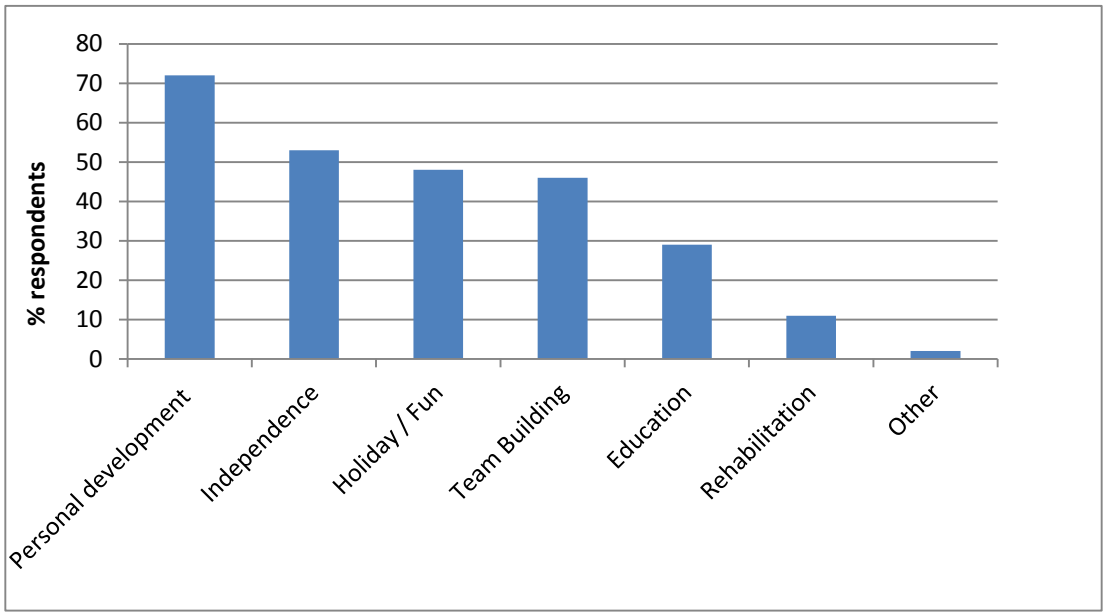
Table 5.1: Results of quality of provision

Aspect	Mean Score	Range	Standard Deviation
Bookings Procedure	9.59	7-10	0.87
Bookings Staff	9.64	7-10	0.64
Accommodation Facilities	9.38	3-10	0.83
Cleanliness	9.63	4-10	1.07
Domestic Staff	9.60	6-10	0.66
Food	9.25	1-10	1.20
Catering Staff	9.57	1-10	0.81
Activities Programme	9.68	7-10	0.67
Activity Facilities	9.74	7-10	0.59
Activities Staff	9.83	7-10	0.42

5.3.2 Course aims

The visiting leaders were requested to select the purpose or the aims of their visit from a pre-determined list of the established course aims of *education, personal development, independence, team building, rehabilitation, holiday* and *other*. Respondents were able to choose multiple aims for their visit and all selections were included in the analysis. A total of 1,078 responses were obtained which averaged 2.15 aims per respondent. The results are shown in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3: Aims of visit

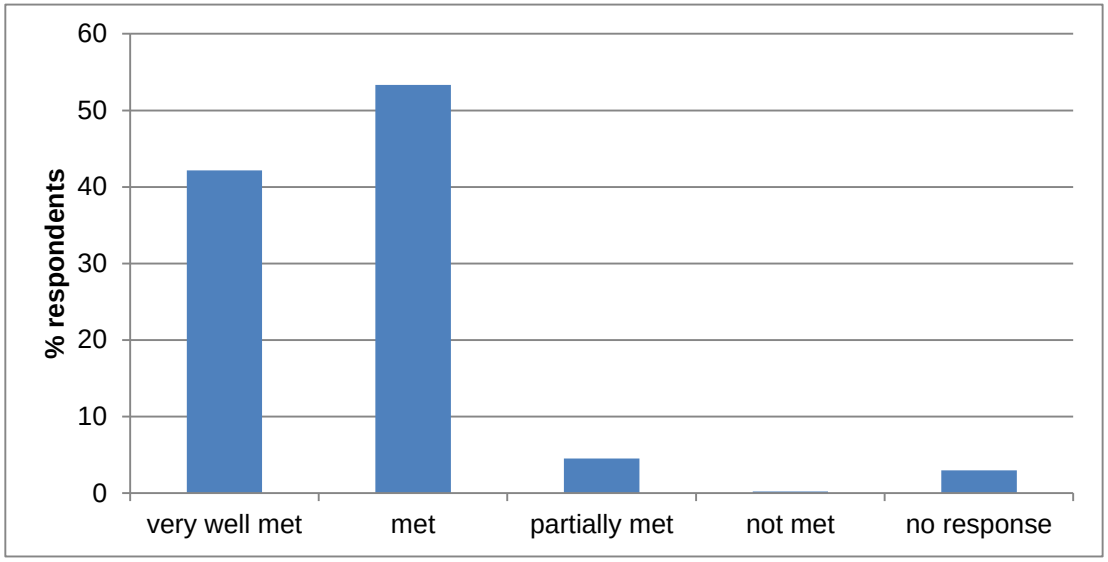


Source: Phase 1 Excel 2002-5 compilation sheet

5.3.3 Whether the aims were met

The responses from free-text fields were coded into four categories: *very well met; met; partially met*; and *not met*. There were 484 valid responses with over 93% of these stating that their aims had been either *very well met* or *met.* One respondent (0.2%) stated their aims were *not met* and 17 respondents (3%) did not respond to this question. The results are shown in Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4: Whether the aims were met

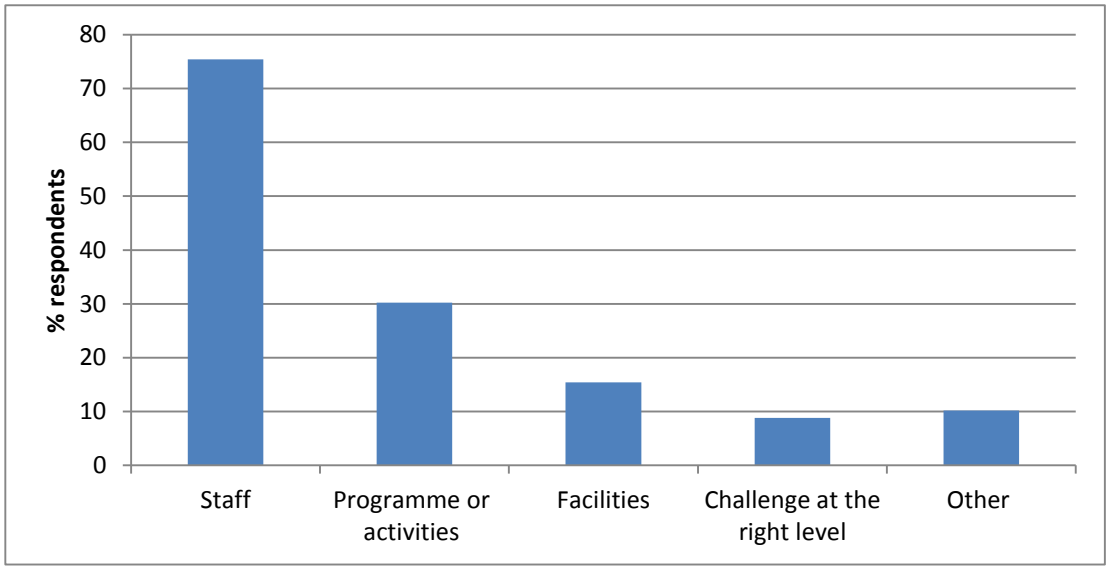


Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/compilation sheet

5.3.4 Factors that helped achieve the aims

Figure 5.5 illustrates those factors that were perceived by visiting leaders to help in achieving the aims of their visit. A total of 700 responses were obtained from 493 evaluations which averaged 1.42 factors per respondent.

Figure 5.5: Factors that helped achieve the aims



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/compilation sheet

5.3.5 The most worthwhile activity

In a free-text field, leaders were asked which activity was the most worthwhile, and why this was the case. Table 5.2 shows in descending order the activities which were considered the *most worthwhile* and the reasons given for choosing that activity, where these were given.

Table 5.2: Reasons why activities were considered 'most worthwhile'

Activity	Responses	Enjoyment	Challenge	Teamwork	Achievement	Learning outcomes	Other	No reason given	Row total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
All	**34**	5	4	4	4	2	9	72	100
Climbing	**26**	6	19	8	21	9	16	21	100
Canoeing	**17**	20	13	15	5	4	23	20	100
Sailing	**11**	28	11	9	8	6	12	26	100
Challenge course	**10**	0	13	35	8	19	19	6	100
Horse riding	**8**	7	10	0	5	12	15	51	100
Walking	**7**	8	22	30	11	5	14	10	100
No. of responses	n = 562	n=55	n=66	n=63	n=52	n=57	n = 126	n = 230	

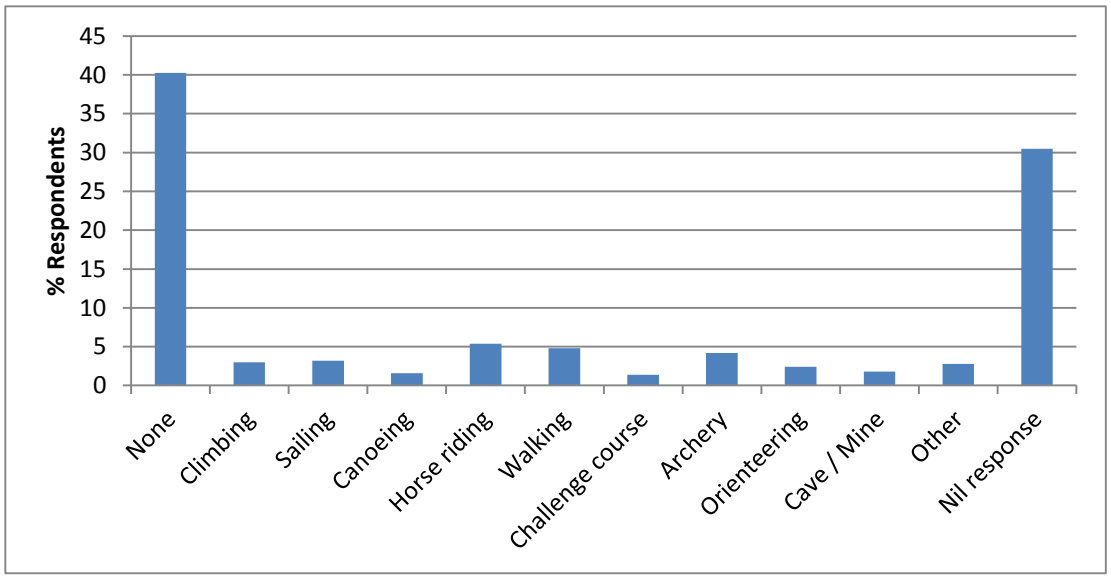
Note: 1. A number of respondents rated more than one activity as 'most worthwhile'.
2. Figures of reasons given are a percentage of those who identified the activity as most worthwhile.

In comparison, the instructional staff (n=703) on their reports identified *climbing* (28%), *challenge-course* (22%) and *walking* (11%) as the activities that worked well in delivering the intended course outcomes. The instructional staff concurred with the visiting leaders in identifying *challenge* (33%), *achievement* (30%) and *teamwork* (18%) as factors that contributed most to the development of their groups or of the individuals within them.

5.3.6 Least worthwhile activity

The free-text field for which activity was *least worthwhile* was left blank on 30% (n=147) of the leader questionnaires and a further 40% (n=202) responded that “no activity” was *least worthwhile*. Where responses were given, these were distributed across the full range of activities. Two activities, horse riding and walking, produced higher returns than the other activities, each being identified by 5% of respondents (see Figure 5.6). The reasons given as to why an activity was *least worthwhile* invariably attributed the cause to factors external to the activity itself. These included the weather, tiredness or the behaviour of participants.

Figure 5.6: Least worthwhile activity



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/compilation sheet

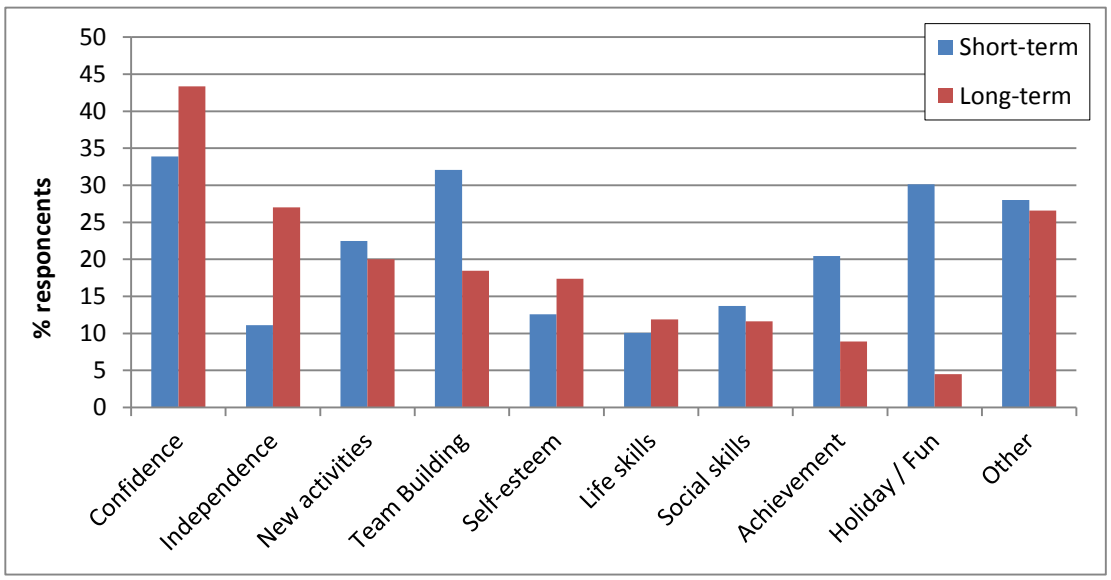
The instructional staff also identified a wide range of activities which did not work well for their groups. Similarly, their choice often related to specific incidences or issues within the group. On a number of occasions the instructors realised they had not made the right decision regarding the specific activity or level of challenge for the participants. These instructors recognised that their decision had resulted in the activities failing to deliver the intended outcomes.

5.3.7 Benefits obtained from participation in the courses

Free-text fields asked leaders to identify any *short* or *long-term benefits* gained from the visit. Through asking the leaders to identify the short-term benefits, an attempt was being made to identify the immediate but possibly ephemeral nature of some of the benefits from participation. Short-term benefits are often influenced by post-course euphoria (Marsh, et al., 1986) generated by the nature of the situation, the enjoyment of the activities and the camaraderie within the course, but these are not necessarily long-lasting. Any long-term benefits identified were considered to be of greater value to the individual because of their potential to make an impact on their lives and because information on this would have greater interest to all stakeholders.

Figure 5.7 shows both the short- and long-term benefits to participants as assessed by their group leaders (n=445). These are arranged in descending order of the long-term benefits.

Figure 5.7: Short- and long-term benefits



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/bookings sheet

The instructional staff (n=703) on their reports frequently observed benefits they perceived participants to acquire during the programme and these comments supported the views of visiting leaders that improved teamwork

or interpersonal skills (18%), independence (13%), confidence (11%) and were the major outcomes from the programmes.

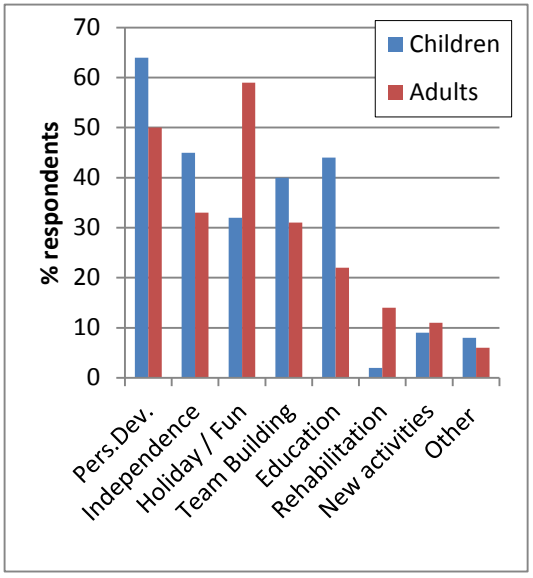
5.3.8 Analysis by age

The data sets were analysed by age of the participants in order to investigate whether age was an antecedent factor in determining the outcomes from outdoor education for people with disabilities. The evaluation questionnaires asked for the age range of the participants on whom the visiting leaders were reporting on (see Appendix A.5.1) and a large number of responses indicated a wide age range of participants within any given group. The majority of groups contained only children or only adults however, and this simple bi-modal differentiation of age was used for the analysis as this was both a pragmatic differentiation used by organisers (due to legal, structural or other considerations) and in terms of developmental stages for the individual also provided a meaningful differentiation in research terms.

The datasets were cleaned of responses which covered both adults and children as participants as well of those in which the age range of participants had not been identified. The resultant dataset consisted of 287 responses from the leaders of 173 child groups (60%) and 114 adult groups (40%). These responses related to 1,523 children (age range 7 to 18) and 824 adults (age range 18 to over 65).

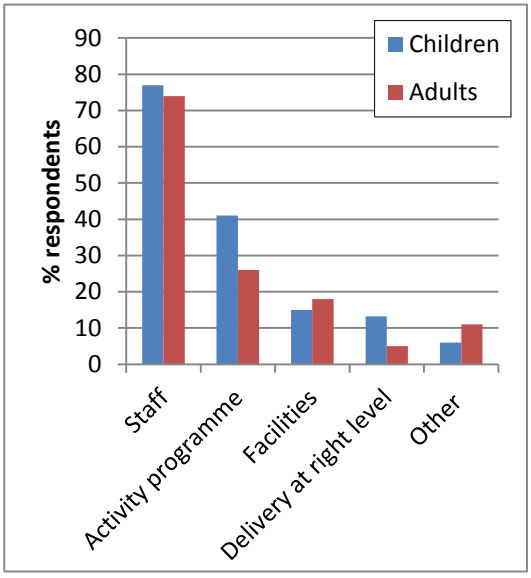
In considering the differences in the aims of their visit, there is a greater emphasis on *personal development, independence, team building* and *education* for the children's groups, whilst for adults there were a greater number participating for *recreational purposes* and for *rehabilitation*, as shown in Figure 5.8.

Figure 5.8: Aims by age



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/age sheet

Figure 5.9: Contributing factors by age

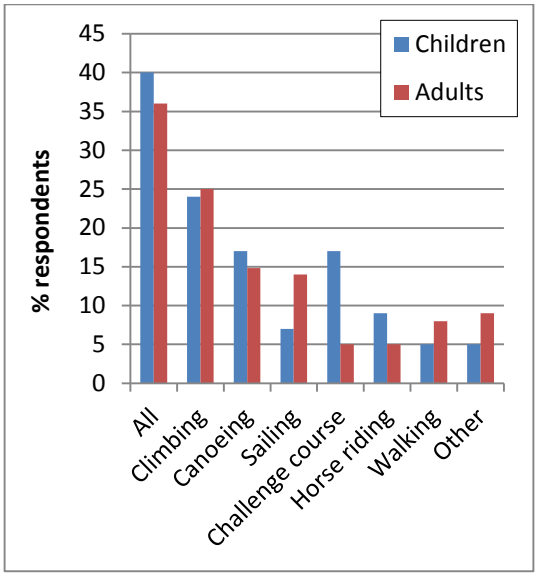


Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/age sheet

For both children and adults the staff were an important contributory factor in achieving the aims. For children the *activity programme* and to a lesser degree *delivery at the right level* were perceived by their leaders as being more important in contributing to the fulfilment of their aims than the contribution these attributes made for the adult groups (see Figure 5.9).

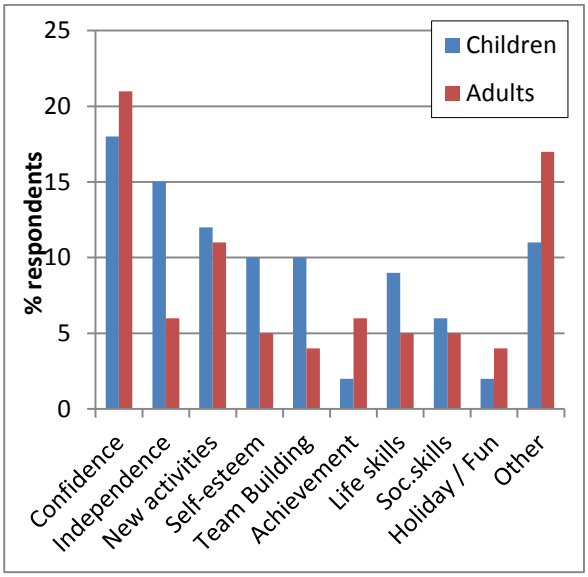
All activities were highly valued by both children and adults. There were notable differences in the value placed on *sailing* (greater for adult groups) and the *challenge course* (greater for children) whilst there were lesser differences between *horse riding* and participating in *all activities* (more highly valued for children) and *walking* (more highly valued for adults). These differences are shown in Figure 5.10.

Figure 5.10: Most worthwhile activity by age



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/age sheet

Figure 5.11: Benefits by age



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/age sheet

Figure 5.11 shows that leaders thought both children and adults made considerable gains in *confidence*. Children were seen as gaining greater *independence, self esteem, team building* skills and *life-skills* than adults, whilst adults were seen to benefit more than children from gaining a *sense of achievement*.

5.3.9 Analysis by disability category

The data sets were analysed by disability, categorised into intellectual, physical, sensory and multiple disabilities. This provided the opportunity to investigate whether these disability categories were an antecedent factor in determining the outcomes from outdoor education for people with disabilities. The disability category in which a completed evaluation was placed was determined from the medical information provided for each participant as part of the Lake District Calvert Trust booking procedures.

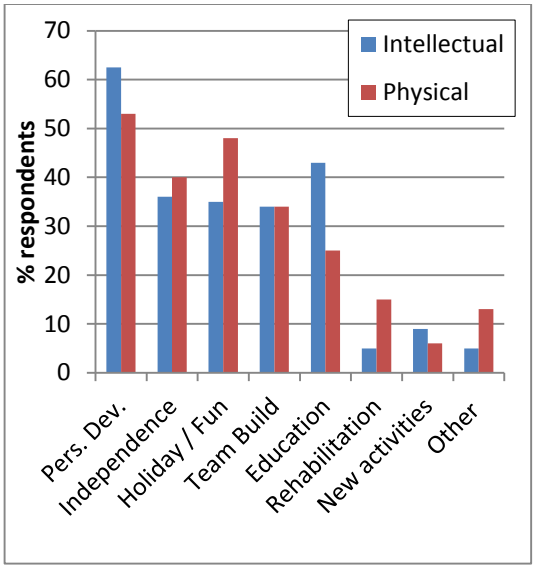
As the leaders' responses related to the whole of their activity group, many of which contained participants from more than one disability category, the dataset had to be cleaned of those responses that did not relate to a single disability category. Once cleaned, the data set comprised of 209 responses, from the leaders of 88 groups of participants with intellectual

impairments (42%), 96 groups with physical impairments (46%), 8 groups with sensory impairments (4%) and 14 groups with multiple disabilities (7%). These related to 730 participants with intellectual impairments, 663 participants with physical impairments, 60 participants with sensory impairments and 44 participants with multiple disabilities. The overall Lake District Centre profile is shown in Figure 5.2 and was 53% with intellectual impairments, 35% with physical impairments, 4% with sensory impairments and 8% with multiple disabilities.

For a comparison to be made across these disability categories, percentages of respondents from each category were required to be used to enable the large variation in numbers of responses to be addressed. Two categories had only a small number of respondents within them and because of this the percentage figures would be disproportionately affected by small variations in response. This is likely to result in a bias in the results towards the opinions of a few leaders in these categories. The initial analysis demonstrated that this was likely to be the case and as a consequence the categories of sensory impairments and multiple disabilities were excluded from the analysis. This left a direct comparison of intellectual and physical impairments being made.

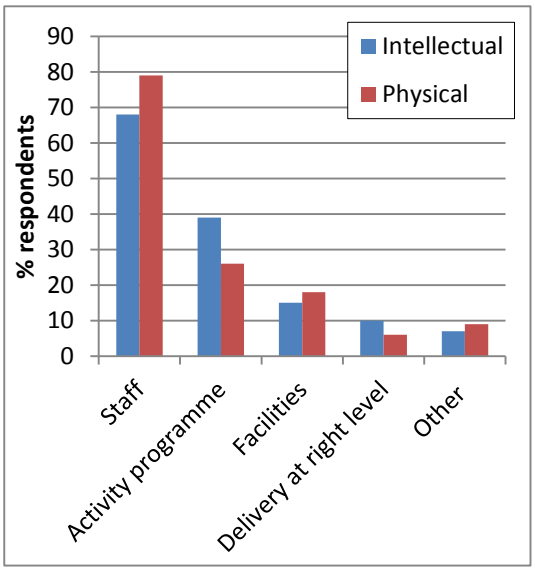
In considering the differences in aims of their visit, there was a greater emphasis amongst leaders on *personal development* and *education* for those with intellectual impairments, whilst for those with physical impairments there was a greater emphasis on participation for *recreational purposes* and for *rehabilitation*, as shown in Figure 5.12. For those with intellectual impairments, the *activity programme* and *delivery at the right level* were perceived by their leaders as being more important in contributing to the fulfilment of their aims whilst in the case of leaders of those with physical impairments the *staff* was seen as contributing most in this respect although the *staff* were rated highly by both categories (see Figure 5.13).

Figure 5.12: Aims by disability category



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/disability

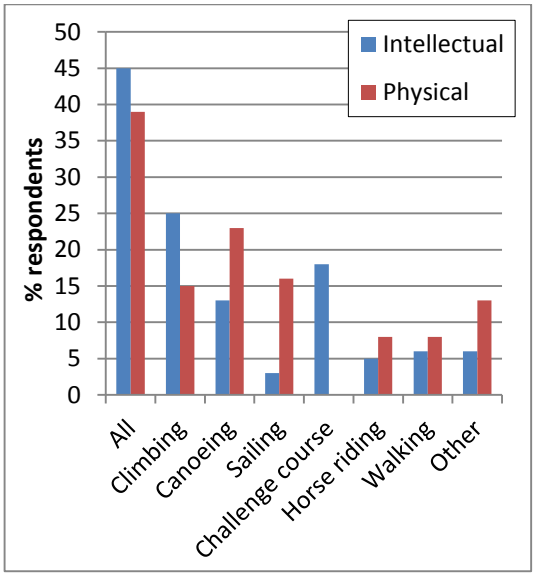
Figure 5.13: Contributing factors by disability category



Source: Phase1/Excel/**2002-5/disability**

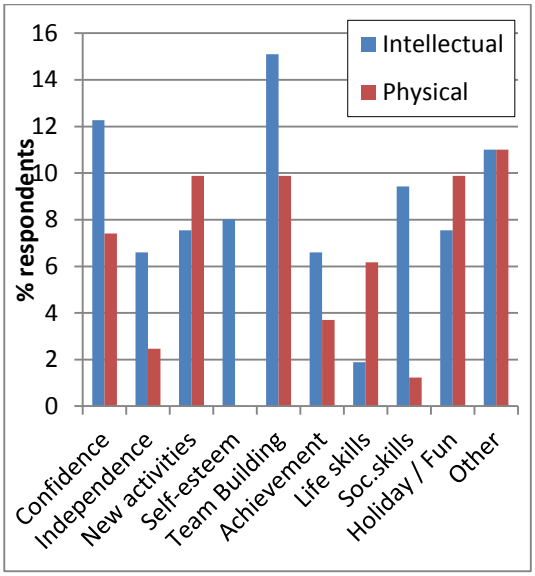
In terms of specific activities, there were notable differences in the value placed upon participating in *climbing* and the *challenge course* (greater for those with intellectual impairments) and the *canoeing* and *sailing* (greater for those with physical impairments). There were lesser differences between the values placed on undertaking a range of activities (*All*) with these being slightly greater for those with intellectual impairments. These differences are shown in Figure 5.14 (over).

Figure 5.14: Most worthwhile activity by disability category



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/disability

Figure 5.15: Benefits by disability category



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/disability

Figure 5.15 shows that those with intellectual impairments are seen to gain greater *confidence, independence, self esteem, team building skills* and *social skills* than those with physical disabilities through their participation in outdoor education. Those with physical impairments are seen to benefit more than those with intellectual impairments from increased *life-skills* and being involved in *new activities*.

5.3.10 Analysis by congenital versus acquired disability

The data sets were analysed to investigate whether having a disability that was congenital or acquired was an antecedent factor in determining the perceived outcomes from outdoor education for people with disabilities. The history of the disability was considered to be relevant to the participant's experience as the world experience of someone with an acquired disability is likely to be very different to those with congenital disabilities. The opportunity to attend mainstream school, to have non-disabled friends, to live and work in non-disabled society before becoming disabled will alter an individual's experiences, outlook and expectations from life and therefore their ambitions through participation in a programme of outdoor education. The category in which a completed evaluation was placed was determined from the same medical information provided for

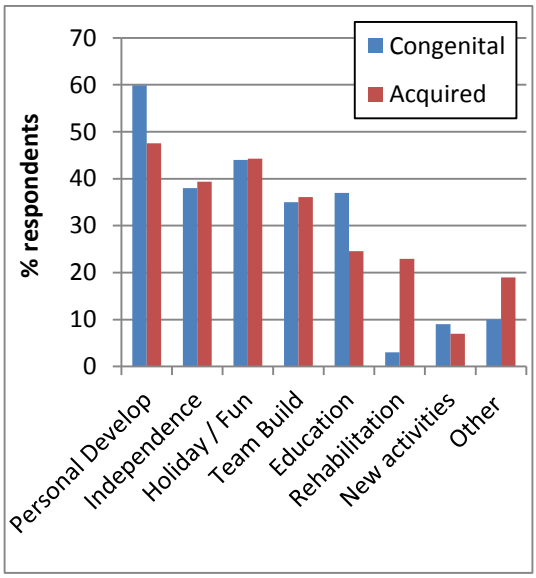
each participant as was used to determine the disability category in Section 5.3.3 above.

Once again, as the leader's response related to the whole of their activity group, many of which were made up of participants with both congenital and acquired disabilities, so the dataset had to be cleaned of those responses that contained participants from both categories, or for which the category could not be determined due to missing data.

Once cleaned, the data set comprised of 285 responses, from the leaders of 224 groups of participants with congenital disabilities (79%) and 61 groups of participants with acquired disabilities (21%). These related to 1,772 participants with congenital disabilities and 460 participants with acquired disabilities.

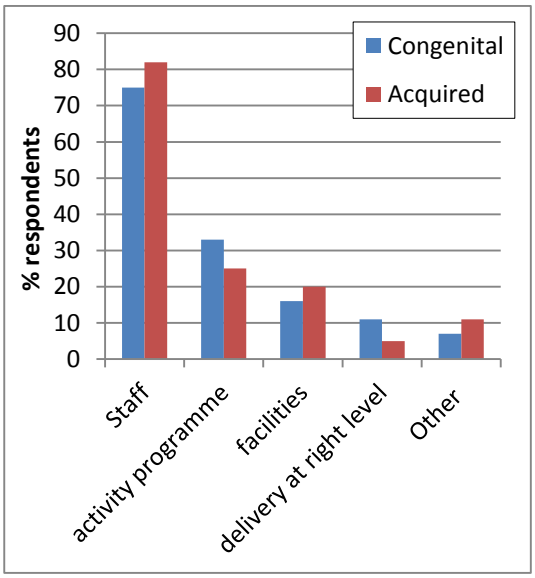
In considering the differences in aims of their visit, although differences were not large, there was a comparatively greater emphasis on *personal development* and *education* for those with congenital disabilities, whilst for those with acquired disabilities there was a greater emphasis on *rehabilitation*, as shown in Figure 5.16.

Figure 5.16: Aims by congenital vs. acquired disability



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/history

Figure 5.17: Contributing factors by congenital vs. acquired disability

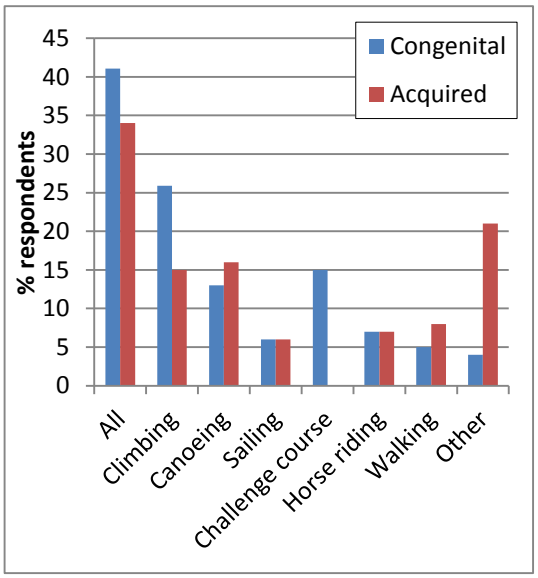


Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/history

For those with congenital disabilities, the *activity programme* and *delivery at the right level* were perceived by their leaders as being more important in contributing to the fulfilment of their aims whilst the *staff* and *facilities* contributed more for those with acquired disabilities although the *staff* contributed highly to both categories (see Figure 5.17).

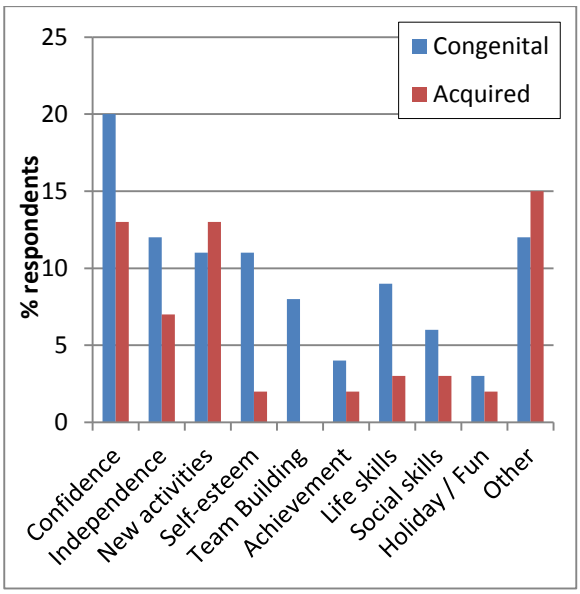
In terms of specific activities, there were notable differences in the value placed upon participating in *all activities*, *climbing* and the *challenge course* with a higher value placed on each of these for those with congenital disabilities. These differences are shown in Figure 5.18.

Figure 5.18: Most worthwhile activity by congenital vs. acquired disability



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/history

Figure 5.19: Benefits by congenital vs. acquired disability



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/history

Figure 5.19 shows that those with congenital disabilities were perceived as gaining greater benefit than those with acquired disabilities across the whole range of reported outcomes with the exception of the benefits gained from participating in *new activities*.

5.3.11 Analysis by customer sector

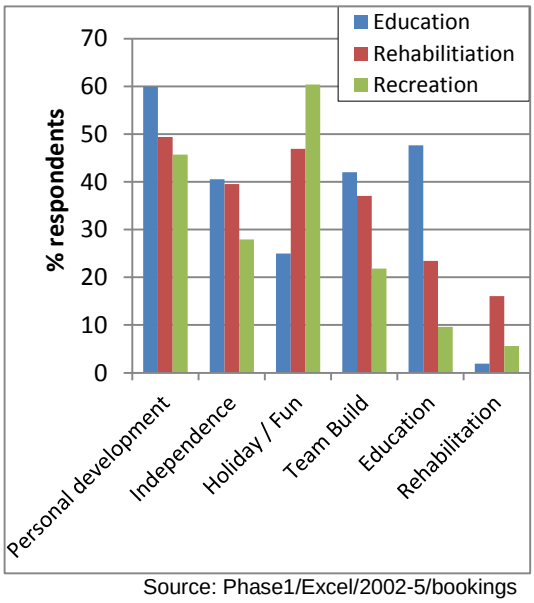
As the organisations visiting the Centre came from a range of customer sectors: educational establishments (e.g. schools); rehabilitation groups (e.g. hospitals or rehabilitation support groups for people with disabilities);

and recreational groups (e.g. families, local support groups, sports clubs) the data sets were analysed to investigate whether these customer sectors were an antecedent factor in determining the outcomes from outdoor education for people with disabilities.

After the returned evaluations for which the customer sector was uncertain had been removed, data from 490 respondents remained available for analysis; these comprised 212 responses from the leaders of educational groups (43%), 81 from the leaders of rehabilitation groups (17%) and 197 from the leaders of recreational groups or families and individuals (40%). These related to 1,682 participants from educational establishments, 641 on rehabilitation courses and 525 on recreational visits.

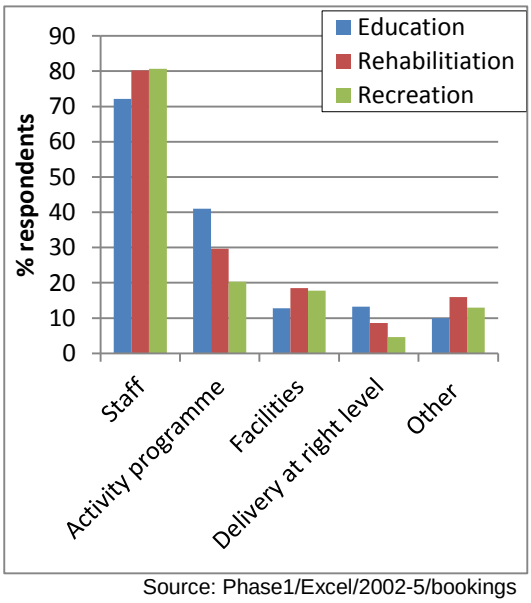
In considering the aims of these visits, *personal development* was notable in its importance across all there sectors. In addition, there was a greater emphasis on *personal development* and *education* for those from the educational sector, on *rehabilitation* from those from the rehabilitation sector and on *holiday and fun* for the recreational sector. For the recreational sector, *team building* understandably took a lower priority than for those from the other two sectors. These results are shown in Figure 5.20.

Figure 5.20: Aims by customer sector



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/bookings

Figure 5.21: Contributing factors by customer sector



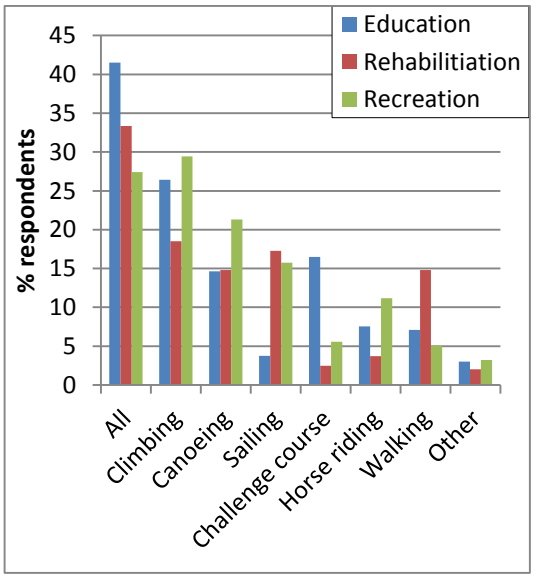
Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/bookings

For those from the education sector the input from the *staff* and the *facilities* were less of a contributory factor to achieving their aims than for the other two sectors although the staff input was greater than other aspects and in all cases exceeded 70%. The contribution of the *activity programme* in achieving the aims was highest for the educational sector and lowest for the recreational sector (see Figure 5.21).

Compared with the other two customer sectors, the educational sector placed a higher value on experiencing *all the activities* and in the *challenge course*. The rehabilitation sector placed a greater value on the *walking* and the recreation sector placed greater value on the *canoeing*. There were other lesser differences in the value placed on the activities across the customer sectors and these differences are shown in Figure 5.22.

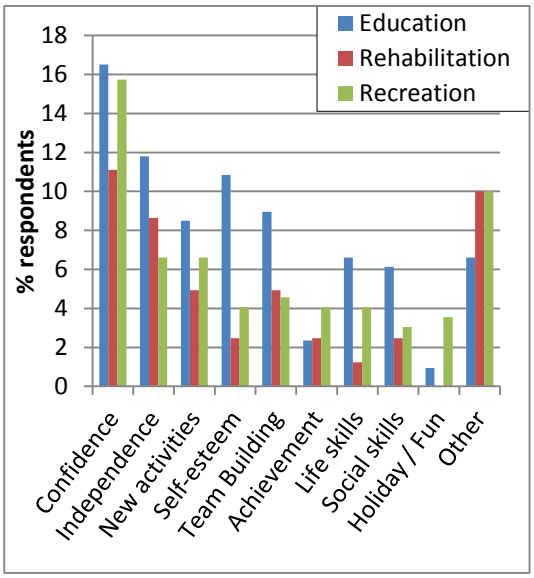
Figure 5.23 shows that participants from the educational sector were seen as gaining greatest benefit across the range of categories, with the exception of *sense of achievement* and *fun*, and some of these differences in perceived benefits were large in comparison to evaluations made by leaders in the other two customer sectors.

Figure 5.22: Most worthwhile activity by customer sector



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/bookings

Figure 5.23: Benefit by customer sector



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/bookings

5.3.12 Confounding factors

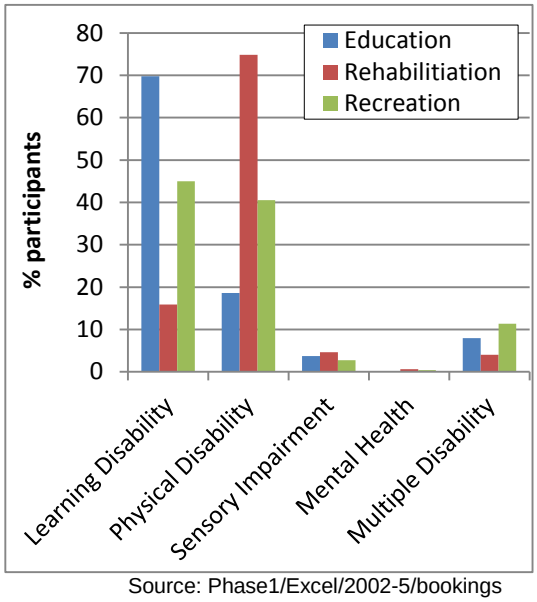
The above analyses have demonstrated that there were differences in the aims, the factors which contributed to the achievement of those aims, the value placed on different activities and the perceived benefits of participating in outdoor education not only between children and adults, intellectual and physical impairments, congenital and acquired disabilities but also across educational, rehabilitation and recreational customer sectors.

The data shows overlaps in the findings between and across the above categories. Ideally a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) would have been carried out to control for these confounding factors and to establish the degree to which the differing participant attributes contributed to the differences in the outcomes. On further investigation, however, it was noted that there were strong associations between the dependent variables in that children, congenital intellectual impairments and educational objectives were associated in within many groups of participants reported on. Likewise there was an association between acquired physical disabilities, adults and rehabilitation courses. These associations would decrease the power of the MANOVA tests (Field, 2009, p. 573). More importantly it had to be accepted that the assumptions for the use of a MANOVA analysis could not be met as random sampling, interval level measurements, normal distribution of the dependent variables and similar group sizes were not present, each of which would have compromised the legitimacy and accuracy of the MANOVA results (Field, 2009, p. 593).

Through inspection of the descriptive datasets presented thus far, however, it is clear that there are substantive differences in the distribution of participants between and across the categories of age, disability type, history and customer sector. For example, it was evident that children with congenital intellectual impairments were major participants in educational courses. There was likewise a proportional over-representation of adults with acquired physical disabilities on rehabilitation or recreational courses.

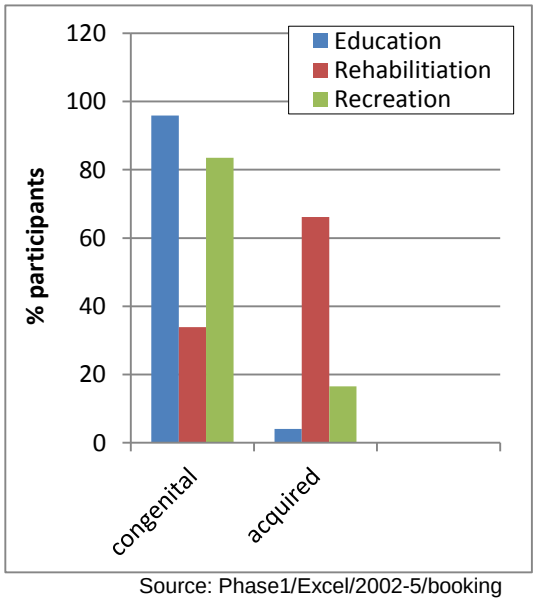
It was also noted that 90% of the educational courses were of 5 days durations with the large majority of the rehabilitation and recreation courses being a full week in duration. This pattern in the findings can be clearly seen through Figure 5.24 to Figure 5.27.

Figure 5.24: Disability category by customer sector



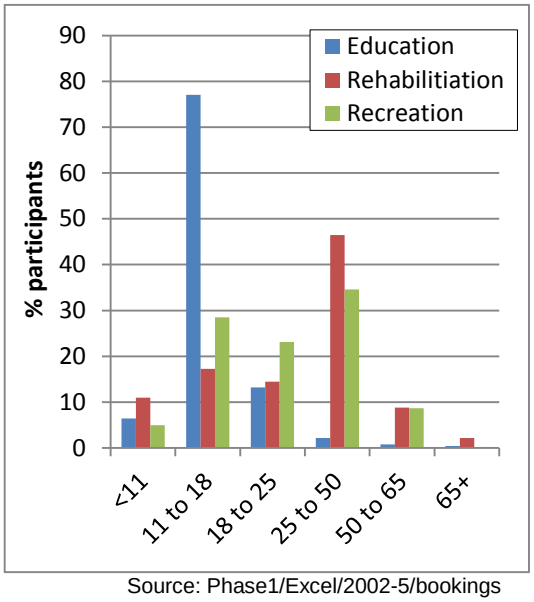
Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/bookings

Figure 5.25: Congenital and acquired by customer sector



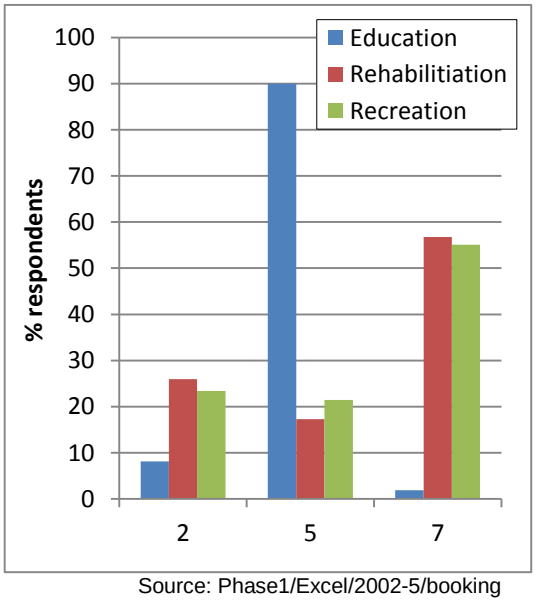
Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/booking

Figure 5.26: Age by customer sector



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/bookings

Figure 5.27: Length of stay (in days) by customer sector



Source: Phase1/Excel/2002-5/booking

In the absence of any mechanism to control for these confounding factors, the associations between these demographic factors will need to be borne in mind during the discussion of the results. It needs to be recognised that the attribute being discussed may not be the causal or sole contributory factor, as it is possible that the findings may also have been influenced by one of the other factors or by a combination of two or more of these.

5.4 Discussion

The responses regarding the *quality of provision* (Table 5-1) demonstrated a "ceiling effect" (Cramer & Howitt, 2005, p. 21) with the majority of respondents giving high scores, thus skewing the distribution towards the positive end of the continuum. A similar effect was found by Bauer (2013) for ratings of quality when researching outdoor activity providers in Eire. Surveys of this type carried out 'in house' are likely to experience a response bias whereby the "customer wishes to please the supplier" and this can result in falsely high scores (SurveySystems, 2012). This concept of 'wishing to please' (or alternatively 'not wishing to offend') is likely to be amplified in situations where there are a very high number of repeat bookings, as was the case with the Lake District Calvert Trust; repeat booking rate during the period being reported on was 82%.

From Table 5-1, it can be seen that the full range of available scores were used in evaluating the catering provided at the Lake District Centre. Statistically the low scores were extreme outliers (but they were not excluded from the calculated means). A wide range of scores were also recorded in evaluations of the accommodation. Both of these are aspects of provision where respondents were likely to have had a range of experiences with which to make comparisons. Notwithstanding this, the mean ratings for all aspects of provision reported on ranged between 9.25 and 9.83 out of a maximum of 10. This would indicate a high-level of customer satisfaction in the services offered by the Centre.

A number of broad categories were offered for the response to the question relating to course aims but neither definitions nor guidance were provided as to their meanings. This may have affected how visiting leaders responded to this question as they are likely to have used their own definitions of the terms. Attention is drawn to the fact that 51% of educational establishments did not identify *education* as an aim, despite many of them including personal development and team building as aims which could be considered 'educational' as these topics are included within the National Curriculum for Personal, Social and Health Education (Department for Education, 2011, 2012). Only 21% of recreational customers identified *holiday / fun* as their sole aim, with the remaining 79% identifying additional aims, including 10% of respondents citing *education* as an aim. The latter implies the interpretation of education was not that of 'formal' education. These variations in definitions might impact on the interpretation of the results by suggesting that there was a greater synergy of aims across the different customer sectors than actually existed.

The provision of a categorical choice of responses was also likely to impact on the responses to the question relating to aims. Prior to 2002 a free-text field was used instead of a categorical choice for the responses to this question. Analysis of the earlier version of the questionnaire showed notably fewer responses of *personal development, independence* and *team building*. This could imply that the provision of these categorical choices may have been suggestive to respondents. In this way the design of the questionnaire was likely to have affected the results.

The results presented in Section 5.3.3 demonstrate that the visiting leaders' intended outcomes were largely being fulfilled. The Centre's procedure of identifying the aims before the visit then designing, delivering and reviewing the programme with those aims in mind, was likely to have contributed to the aims of the visit being met. As this was a post-course questionnaire, it was also possible that the leaders had modified their stated aims to reflect their observed development of the participants during the course.

On those occasions where it was reported that the aims had only been *partially met,* the reasons given invariably related to the behaviour or nature of the individuals within the group, rather than to any shortcoming within the programme.

Attention must again be drawn to the possible desire of customers to please a service provider having contributed once more to the very positive profile of responses (SurveySystems, 2012). Despite this potential response bias, the results show that the visiting leaders were satisfied that their intended aims were being delivered and this interpretation is supported by the high percentage of repeat bookings made over the period under study (82%).

Figures 5-5, 5-9, 5-13, 5-17 and 5-21 show that irrespective of age, disability category or customer sector, the instructional staff were seen as the major contributory factor in the achievement of the aims. Overall, 78% of respondents identified the Centre staff as the factor that contributed most to the achievement of the aims and 16% of respondents made a further specific reference to the instructors' contribution in the free-text fields. A reason for the perceived contribution of the instructors could be associated with the primary aims (shown in Figure 5.3) as being *personal development, independence, enjoyment* or *team building* with these being regarded as 'soft skills', the achievement of which may be regarded as dependent on the skills of the delivery staff.

Bauer (2013) noted that staff generally, and instructional staff in particular, were an important aspect of outdoor activity provision as they are the direct communication link to the organisation and the main source of information for the customer. In UK centres instructional staff are generally held in high esteem by both the participants and visiting leaders and this may be attributed to the personality traits of those entering the profession. Karlsson-Smythe (2011) considered that these positive and enabling traits are particularly high in those with interest in working with people with disabilities.

Luckner & Nadler (1997) state that achieving success within the activities is vital to the development of confidence and self-esteem of participants and both these benefits were frequently reported as aims for courses (both grouped under personal develeopment in Figure 5.3). Thus it was of interest to note the absence of 'achieving success' from the contributing factors in the responses. That is not to say that achieving success was not present, and the contribution of achievment to the outcomes is demonstrated in Table 5.2. Rather it was likely that it was the staff who were seen as the 'contributary factor' by setting the challenge at the right level for the individual and ensuring that participants were sucessful in achieving the objective set.

The factors which contributed to the achievement of aims might be expected to vary across the different customer sectors given the differing aims of each of the sectors represented in the datasets (as shown in Figure 5.3). For example, for those on holiday, having fun is likely to be high priority and the instructor's approach to the activities could be expected to affect the enjoyment more than, say, the activity programme itself. Also, for those on holiday, good facilities might make a major contribution to an individual's comfort and hence enjoyment. In contrast, for those on educational courses the opportunity to try a range of activities could be an essential 'educational' element of the experience, whist communal living (in dormitories) might lead to a better understanding of others needs, again contributing to the desired learning outcomes. However, such differences are not shown between the educational and recreational sectors in their responses to this question, with the exception of the relative contributions of the *activity programme* and *delivery at the right level.* Bauer (2013) also reported little difference in the importance of differing aspects of outdoor activity provision to meeting the aims of customers coming from the educational versus recreational sectors.

The identification that *all activities* were either *worthwhile* or the *most worthwhile* by 34% of leaders could imply that for many it was the whole Centre experience that contributed to the desired outcomes rather than any one activity. This is supported by the fact that most (72%) who responded to

this question did not offer a reason why all activities were worthwhile (see Table 5-2).

When analysed by customer sector, some activities such as *climbing* and *canoeing*, were similarly rated across all the customer sectors, whist other activities, such as *sailing*, *challenge course* and *walking*, had notable differences. This could be at least partially attributed to the programme design or delivery. For example, schools dominated the bookings over the winter months when sailing was not available, so this activity could not feature in the responses of those participating at that time of year. Walking was delivered in a particular style for a number of the rehabilitation courses and this appeared to help deliver the desired learning outcomes for this sector. Similarly, the challenge course was valued by the education sector and the involvement of *teamwork* in this activity (see Table 5-2) closely matches the intended outcomes for educational courses which includes *team building* (see Figure 5.3). The latter points are supported by the returns from instructional staff who rated both the *challenge course* and *walking* as working well in delivering the intended outcomes for the participants on educational and rehabilitation courses respectively. Comments from the instructor reports serve to illustrate this point:

> **Challenge course** … The group had to work together to achieve the task set and after this they worked far better as a team in everything they did (Long standing male instructor on school course, 2005).

> **Walking** … this provided a great personal challenge for many of the group but the satisfaction of reaching the summit really showed them what they could achieve if they were driven and put in the work. It was kind of a revelation to them (Recently joined female instructor on rehabilitation course, 2002).

From the data presented in Table 5.2 it could be deduced that climbing provided a *challenge* and a *sense of achievement*, whist canoeing provided opportunities for *enjoyment* and *teamwork*. The challenge-course contributed to *teamwork* and for focusing on *other learning outcomes*. On the other hand,

although *sailing* was enjoyable, it provided few of the other outcomes desired by the Centre's clients.

Rather than assuming that those attributes shown in Table 5.2 and described above are intrinsic to the activities themselves, it would be perhaps more prudent to interpret the findings as showing those attributes that *may* be drawn out of the activities when presented to a specific client group in a particular manner. Through the replacement of a high abseil with a low-level traverse when climbing, or using solo kayaks in lieu of rafted open canoes for instance, the attributes credited to the climbing and canoeing activities could be dramatically altered. Hence, it can only be construed that certain activities have the *potential* to deliver particular outcomes to certain participants. What may be concluded from these findings is that in order to produce a programme that delivers the outcomes sought by a customer, it is important to be aware not only of the intended outcomes and the activities that have the potential to deliver those outcomes, but also the style in which specific activities need to be presented in order to deliver the intended benefits.

The most frequently reported reasons given by visiting leaders from the recreation sector for their rating of an activity as *most worthwhile* was *enjoyment*, followed by *challenge*, then *teamwork*. For the rehabilitation sector the attributes of *challenge, teamwork* and *enjoyment* were evenly distributed. Educational establishments reported *teamwork, achievement, challenge* then *learning* in that order. Despite the obvious variations in the order in which these attributes featured, there was a clear commonality in that these were the attributes of the activities which made the activities worthwhile across all customer sectors. The instructional staff concurred with the visiting leaders in identifying *challenge*, *achievement* and *teamwork* as contributing most to the development of their groups or of the individuals within them.

Direct comparison of the instructors' reports to the visiting leaders' evaluation of the same course showed that the instructors and the leaders were in

agreement as to the programme of activities and processes involved that best helped to achieve the intended outcomes for the participants. When responses from visiting leaders and instructors could be matched with both reporting on the same course with the same participants, there were no instances where the leader and the instructor had different opinions as to the most worthwhile activity. This congruence could, however, have been influenced by the discussions which routinely occur between Centre instructors and visiting leaders during courses.

Walking, sailing and horse riding featured as both the *most worthwhile* and the *least worthwhile* activity. One explanation for this could be that some activities do not deliver the intended outcomes of some courses yet deliver different outcomes for other courses with different objectives. An alternative explanation could involve an 'instructor effect', where different staff members deliver an activity in a different way and it is the style of delivery which causes the variations in outcomes for the participants (Gassner & Russell, 2008; Hopkins & Putnam, 1993). A third suggestion might be that instructors more easily misjudge the appropriate level of activity for participants in these particular activities and it has been their choice of setting or style of delivery for the activity which has caused the variations in how worthwhile the activity has been for the participants. Finally there is the possibility that it is a combination of two or more of the above effects.

From this study, there is some evidence to support the view that a misjudgement by the instructor may have been the primary factor as the vast majority of *least worthwhile* comments referred to activities that had either been conducted early on in the programme, or where the lead instructor had to be replaced mid-course. In both cases, the instructor may not have had time to ascertain the capabilities of the participants. If this is believed to be the cause, it supports the arguments for careful sequencing of activities within an outdoor education programme (as discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.3) and for the continuity of staff throughout an outdoor education course. The latter is likely to be particularly relevant when working with disabled

people, as those with disabilities have a wider variety of life experiences and a greater range of physical and intellectual capabilities. All of these factors need to be taken into account in order for the most appropriate level of challenge to be set and to create 'optimal dissonance' and through the success of achievement in these circumstances to bring about the desired personal change (also described in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.3).

From Figure 5.7 it can be seen that confidence and independence are perceived as the main benefits accruing from the Lake District Calvert Trust experience. The visiting leaders viewed the confidence of participants as having increased in the short-term and many also saw this increase in confidence as a longer-term benefit. On the other hand, although some leaders perceived that there might have been an immediate increase in independence, the greater number perceived this as a likely longer-term impact on the lives of participants.

Taking part in new activities was reported as being beneficial both in the short-term, possibly through doing the activity itself, but the perceived longer-term benefit may indicate that the activities led to recreational opportunities for the future. In the short-term, team building benefits might have been referring to the improvements in the functioning of the 'team' attending the Centre, whilst in the long-term the benefits attributed to team building may have referred to the development of the skills that help build relationships within team situations. Finally the relative short-term beneficial impact of achievement and the ephemeral nature of the benefits gained from a recreational break were noted.

On the occasions when the instructors commented on outcomes that they had observed participants obtain, they supported the visiting leaders' opinions that improved teamwork or interpersonal skills, independence and confidence were the major outcomes from the programmes. However, it must be noted that the instructors' perspective can only be in relation to changes seen between the behaviours displayed at the start and finish of the course,

and these may be influenced by the unfamiliar environment causing nervousness and the need to ask questions to help get to know the Centre. In addition, the outcomes seen from this perspective cannot be assumed to persist beyond the end of the course as the instructors have no knowledge of participants beyond then.

The very low reporting of any increase in environmental awareness during or post-course was notable and contrary to current theoretical expectations of this being a significant outcome of taking part in activities set in the outdoors (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1). A possible cause of this could be a failure by the instructional staff to focus on the environment during activity sessions. However, this would have been contrary to the Centre's environmental policy and with the location of the Centre at the heart of a National Park containing some of the most outstanding countryside in Great Britain, it might have been expected that at least some aspect of the environment would have made an impression on the participants rather than "the landscape being relegated to nothing more than a backdrop" (Beames, et al., 2012, p. 13). An alternative explanation is provided by O'Brien, et al. (2011) who argue that benefits from being in the natural environmental are obtained through the combination of both exposure to nature and an active contact with nature. Thus being within an inspirational environment is not enough as there needs to be a tangible, sensory element to the experience and this may not have been present on every occasion. A third explanation may be that the responses to the evaluation questionnaires used in this first phase of the research were the perceptions by a third party of the benefits to participants rather than the opinions of the participants themselves. It may be that the importance of environmental issues for the participants were overlooked in respondents' eyes due to other, more obvious impacts of the course deemed to be of greater importance to the life of the individual participant or indeed to the agenda of the visiting leader. Bauer (2013, p. 13) noted that a "beautiful setting" made little difference to the quality of the experience and that "the environment was not the aspect adventure tourists were most concerned

about". It is possible that similar feelings could have influenced the evaluations of visiting leaders to the Lake District Calvert Trust.

From Figure 5.23 it can be seen that the main reported benefits of *confidence* and *independence*, were important to all three customer sectors. What can also be noted from Figure 5.23 was the higher reporting of benefits on all personal fronts from the educational sector. A likely explanation of this was that teachers would already have many of these aspects of personal development on their agenda and in their everyday vocabulary, a combination of which might have resulted in their more frequent appearance in a free-text context in comparison to visiting leaders from the other sectors.

5.5 Summary

The secondary data analyses of the visiting leaders' post-course evaluation questionnaires and the instructors' post-course reports presented above have gone some way in answering the research questions identified in Chapter 4 for this phase of the research.

The results have identified the key benefits for people with disabilities participating in the outdoor activities provided by the Lake District Calvert Trust, as perceived by the leaders who accompanied the participants and supporting evidence was provided by the instructional staff although their perspective has limitations in the instructor's lack of knowledge of the participants before and after the programme. The main long-term benefits were identified as *independence* and *confidence* with additional short-term benefit of improved *teamwork skills*.

Information has been gleaned as to which activities were seen as most beneficial. The opportunity to take part in a range of activities was the most frequent response followed by climbing then canoeing. The reasons for these activities being so valued by visiting leaders was the challenge and achievement offered by climbing and the enjoyment and teamwork in canoeing. The attributes of challenge, achievement and teamwork were also

identified by the instructors although after climbing they placed high value on the challenge course and walking.

The analyses of the demographic factors of age, disability category, whether the disability was congenital or acquired and customer sector were carried out in an attempt to isolate any antecedent aspect inherent to participants that might have had an important influence on the aims for, and outcomes from, the courses offered. The results identified both overlaps and differences in aims and outcomes across these distinct demographic characteristics, however, the strong positive associations between all of these characteristics and the inability to control for these confounding factors made it impossible to isolate the magnitude of the effect of any of these separate elements.

The three main influences on the outcomes of outdoor education courses of *the people, the programme* and *the process* were outlined in Chapter 2. Although the specific antecedent factors could not be isolated there were clear association between these antecedent factors and the aims and outcomes from the course. The programmes have had some variation of length and specific activities undertaken but all have been conducted within the culture of a single centre. The processes involved in delivering the activities are likely to have been modified to best meet the needs of the participants on each course as identifying aims and intended outcomes was an important part of the programme negotiation process with the group organisers. The contribution the staff made to the delivery of the intended outcomes as identified by the visiting leaders was evidence that the instructors were clear as to what they were being asked to deliver and used appropriate processes to ensure that the needs of both the participants and organisers were met.

5.6 Informing future research

This first phase of the research has provided some useful insights into the quality of the data that can be obtained through using visiting leaders as

informants as to the benefits of outdoor education for people with disabilities. The analyses have also demonstrated that the instructional staff can provide valuable data on the roles specific activities may play in delivering the intended outcomes of the programmes offered, and on the attributes of the activities or the processes involved which are seen as helping to deliver the intended benefits. The evaluation data provided by the instructional staff concurred with the opinions of the visiting leaders despite the relatively short period of direct contact they would typically have had with the participants.

All the outdoor education experiences reported on in this phase of the research took place within a single outdoor centre and because of this single approach to outdoor education, it is perhaps not surprising that there were many similarities in the evaluations of the activity programmes offered. Any overlap in outcomes across differing participant populations could be attributable to the process used to deliver the learning which in itself was determined by the organisational culture, rather than by the specific characteristics of the people attending the course or the customer sector from which they originated.

In going forward, it was considered of interest to compare the outcomes of the Lake District Centre with those from the other two Calvert Trust Centres. This would establish whether reports of similar benefits had been returned across the three Centres despite the variations in organisational culture, approach to outdoor education, the different programmes and processes and also the differing profiles within the customer sectors as described in Chapter 1, Section 1.5.5.

The voices of the participants themselves were not heard in Phase 1 of this study. This is an essential perspective from which to view the outcomes of outdoor education not only from a constructivist viewpoint but also from a contemporary social viewpoint, in that children, people with disabilities and those with intellectual impairments have the right to have their voices heard. The need to provide the opportunity for the participants to have their voices

heard is addressed in the design of the following stages of this research, allowing comparisons to be made of the opinions of the participants with those who have organised the experiences on their behalf.

Chapter 6

Phase 2: Post-course evaluations of the three Calvert Trust Centres

6.1 Introduction

The second phase of this research utilised three archived data sets held by each of the three Calvert Trust Centres – nine datasets in all. The data had been derived from post-course evaluation questionnaires completed by visiting leaders, post-course evaluation questionnaires completed by participants and reports of notable events completed by the instructional staff. These questionnaires and reports formed part of the course evaluation system designed by the University of Strathclyde that was used across the three Centres to provide data as to the overall outcomes of the work of Calvert Trust as a whole (see Chapter 4, Section 4.6.2 and Section 6.2 below).

The data used in this phase of the research had been collected over three years from 2006 to 2008. Prior to 2006, each Centre had used its own evaluation systems with the Lake District Centre's results having been reported on in Phase 1 of this study (see Chapter 5). Although the data employed for Phase 2 of the present study had been used regularly for evaluation purposes by each individual Centre for its own purposes, an in-depth analysis of the data sets across the three Centres had not been carried out due to the lack of staff resource.

The aim of this phase of the research was to identify the benefits perceived by participants from their visit to the Calvert Trust and to make a comparison across the three Centres to identify if any difference existed between the Centres that would warrant further investigation.

This line of enquiry was instigated by the observation that the three Centres delivered different ‘products’ with these having been developed for the differing customer markets that each Centre targeted (as outlined in Chapter 1, Section 1.5.5). The product development had resulted in differences in the programme (structured programmes as opposed to opt-in/opt-out activities); differences in continuity of the staff involved (lead instructor remaining with the group as opposed to sessional instructors); the instructor skill-set (educators as opposed to activity leaders); differences in the context in which the activities were delivered (learning as opposed to fun alone); and the learning processes used (progressive challenge and reviewing as opposed to allowing the experiences to “speak for themselves” (Bacon, 1987; James, 1980)).

Prior to the analyses commencing, consent was gained from the Calvert Trust to access the data and the University of Edinburgh ethical guidelines were followed in relation to all handling of these data, as discussed in Chapter 4.

6.2 Design and Procedures

This section outlines Phase 2 of the research and discusses the design and procedures that were undertaken, the participants who took part, the research tools used and the data analysis.

The University of Strathclyde was employed by the Calvert Trust to design and implement the data collection tools for a large-scale evaluation project, to ensure that it was suitable for use “across the centres and client groups” (P. Barnes & Saunders, 2005, p. 2). The design had to take into account the differing operating procedures of the individual Centres and the different clientele attending them. The intention was to use a triangulation of viewpoints (participants, visiting leaders and Centre instructors) that would enable the programme to be studied from more than one observation point (P. Barnes & Saunders, 2005). This project was completed in 2005 and the evaluation systems adopted in all three Centres during 2006.

6.2.1 Post-course evaluation by visiting leaders

Design

The post-course evaluation questionnaire for the visiting leaders used in this phase was based on the questionnaire used for this same purpose by the Lake District Calvert Trust in Phase 1 of this study (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1). The University of Strathclyde had made some modifications to the design of the questionnaire and the data collection tools. These changes included the removal of the question relating to the perceived benefits, the addition of a free text-field for recording any notable events and the replacement of the numerical rating for various aspects of the visit with a Likert scale. (These changes may be seen by the comparison of Appendices A.5.1 with A.6.1).

Respondents

The visiting leaders were the respondents for this questionnaire for the reasons already stated in Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1. The questionnaires were distributed on the final day of the visit to all visiting leaders attending each Centre between 2006 and 2008. To maximise the response rate, the visiting leaders were encouraged to hand in the completed form before departure.

For the reasons explained in Section 6.2.4 below, only the data from 2007 were included in the research. The total number of responses from visiting leaders in this year was 397. These consisted of 222 (56%) from the Exmoor Centre, 121 (30%) from the Lake District and 54 (13%) from Kielder. As the Centres have similar occupancy in terms of visitor numbers the variation in responses warranted further investigation to discern if there was a bias in the profile of the respondents.

The investigation found that there was a lack of consistency across the Centres as to who was considered a ‘visiting leader’ and as a result who was asked to complete an evaluation. In the Exmoor Centre a *visiting leader questionnaire* was given to the lead representative of every booking module,

whether it was a large group, a family or an individual. In the Lake District the questionnaires were given to the lead representative in every activity group (thus multiple returns may be received from a single booking unit of more than 13 people, as above this number the party was split into more than one group for activities.) Family booking units were given a group leader questionnaire but visitors who came by themselves or accompanied only by a "buddy" or care staff were not. In the Kielder Centre the visiting leader questionnaires were only given to the lead representative of organisations but not to families or individuals.

Thus there was a respondent bias in that the Kielder Centre data did not include responses from families or individuals which were a large proportion of their customers. The Lake District Centre did not include responses from those who booked as individuals (although these were only a small proportion of their customers) but the Lake District Centre data did include multiple responses from visiting organisations with over 13 participants, that were absent from the other two Centres.

From the information provided by the Centres as to whom questionnaires were distributed, as described above, it was calculated that 770 post-course evaluation questionnaires should have been distributed to visiting leaders during the period of this phase of the research. This gave an overall response rate of 51% with a response rate of 74% from the Exmoor Centre, 76% from the Lake District Centre and 30% from the Kielder Centre. Every questionnaire returned was included in the study.

Measurement tools

The evaluation questionnaire focussed on *the aims of the visit; whether the aims were met; the factors that helped/prevented aims being achieved; the most and least worthwhile activities; any stories leaders wished to share* and the *quality of the provision* divided between the activities and other aspects of the visit. The two questions relating to identification of the *aims* and *whether these were met* offered a categorical choice along with the *aims* having an

alternative option of using a free-text field. The questions relating to the quality of provision used a 5-point Likert scale spanning a response spectrum from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’. The remainder of the questions offered free-text fields (see Appendix A.6.1). For the analysis of the post-course evaluation questionnaire for visiting leaders, all but one of the questions in the questionnaire was relevant to the research aims and included in the analyses. The question omitted asked if the respondent carried out their own evaluation of the visit.

6.2.2 Post-course evaluations by participants

Design

The participant post-course evaluation questionnaire employed similar questions asked of the visiting leaders but with subjective wording and simplified language being used. Additional questions covered self-reports on personal development outcomes from the experience.

Respondents

The participants who visited the Centres between 2006 and 2008 were the respondents of this post-course evaluation questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered in paper format on the final day of the visit and either collected from participants on completion or those accompanying them were asked to hand-in the completed forms before departure. Every questionnaire returned was included in the study, although only the data from 2007 was used.

The exact number of questionnaires distributed was unknown but a total of 10,588 people attended one of the three Centres during the period of which 4,818 people had disabilities. There were a total number of 2,507 returned evaluation questionnaires from participants and these comprised of 1,522 (61%) from the Exmoor Centre, 441 (18%) from the Lake District and 544 (22%) from Kielder.

Again the variation in the return rate required further investigation to ascertain whether there was a respondent bias. It was found that there was a lack of consistency across the Centres as to which participants were given an evaluation form for completion.

In the Lake District Centre there was some discretion by instructors as to whom the evaluation questionnaires were distributed. The decision was influenced by two factors. Firstly, if the instructor considered that there was insufficient time within the programme for participants to complete the evaluation without adversely impacting on the outdoor education experience, then they did not distribute the evaluations to participants (although they still gave evaluations to visiting leaders). Because of this, evaluations from this Centre were frequently not given to participants on weekend courses or other short programmes, invariably of under three days. Secondly, if the instructor (who had worked with the participants throughout their stay) considered that the comprehension level of the participants made the style or wording of the questionnaire inappropriate then again it was not used. Thus from the Lake District Centre the sample was likely to have been biased towards respondents from longer courses and with higher levels of comprehension.

In the Exmoor and Kielder Centres, evaluation forms were given to every participant but at Exmoor a more disciplined approach was taken to ensure the completion and return of these evaluations, whilst at Kielder the approach appeared to be quite *laissez-faire* with participants being given the option to complete and return the forms if they wanted to.

Due to the lack of information as to the number of post-course evaluation questionnaires distributed and the variations across Centres as to whom questionnaires were given, it has not been possible to calculate true response rates. Nonetheless, response rates have been calculated from the information provided by the Centres as to whom questionnaires were given, combined with visitor data from that Centre. From this information Exmoor had a response rate of 68% and Kielder 22% of the questionnaires given out.

The Lake District had a response rate of 29% of all participants with disabilities, who attended the Centre, however, as has been explained, a number of the participants were not given an evaluation form.

As can be seen above, although evaluation questionnaires were distributed to every participant who attended both the Exmoor and Kielder Centres, the Exmoor Centre obtained a far higher response rate. The only explanation of this difference was the variations in the way the distribution and collection of the questionnaires were managed, with this appearing less structured at the Kielder Centre, which was in keeping with the activity programming. Although the management of the evaluation may explain the large variation in response rate, further investigation would be warranted to confirm that there were no other influences.

Measurement tools

The post-course evaluation questionnaire for the participants was presented in a different style and format to the visiting leader questionnaire discussed above. Participants were asked their agreement with statements about a range of possible outcomes that they may have obtained during the programme, the most and least worthwhile things they did, their satisfaction with a number of aspects of the provision, and the type of disability they had. All 20 of the questions were deemed relevant for inclusion in the analyses (see Appendix A.6.2). The eight questions about the Centre provision and the eight questions about the benefits used a five-point Likert scale to record responses. The Likert scales again spanned a response spectrum from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’, and face symbols were used to reflect each of the five possible responses in an attempt to make the questionnaire more accessible to those with intellectual impairments. Free-text responses were used for the two questions pertaining to the ‘most’ and the ‘least’ worthwhile features of the visit. A further question about the main benefits of the visit and the question about disability type used a categorical response.

6.2.3 Reports by instructional staff

Design

For Phase 2, the reports by instructional staff recorded specific events which the instructors considered to be Magic Moments, that is, “those moments which are deemed to be both moving and memorable and thus are those that people really value” (J. Reid, Hull, Cater, & Fleuriot, 2005, p. 290). This reporting was appropriate due to the instructors running single sessions in two of the Centres so the more detailed report on the whole programme used in Phase 1 would not be possible to complete.

Respondents

The *Magic Moments* forms were completed by any of the instructional staff when they witnessed a notable event that was considered could be *moving and memorable* and hence likely to have an impact on the development of a participant.

Measurement tools

The reports from the instructional staff were in the form of a log that recorded the “magic moments” as they occurred. This was intended to be related to events or the inspirational stories provided by visiting staff and the most worthwhile things about the visit as seen by the participants. (P. Barnes, personal communication 2004)

6.2.4 Analyses

The data from the measurement tools were collected by the individual Centres and transferred to an Excel spreadsheet provided by the University of Strathclyde for local use by that Centre. It was noted that the data from the Likert scale and categorical questions had been transferred onto the spreadsheets but none of the free-text fields had been transcribed by any of the three Centres.

The data collection tool designed to include the perspective from the instructional staff, the *Magic Moments* logs, had a response rate of less than 1% of courses or sessions run in two of the Centres and with so little data it was decided to exclude this viewpoint from this Phase of the research.

In order that a comparison could be made across the three Centres, the data sets required to be cleaned prior to analyses, as a number of inconsistencies and errors had been noted. The inconsistencies included the altering of the wording of some of the questions within individual Centres that resulted in a different question being asked, but the data was recorded in the same spreadsheet fields as unaltered questions. Errors had occurred in the distribution of the questionnaires which included the distribution of leader questionnaires to participants and vice versa. As a result the integrity of some of the data was reduced. Additionally, not all of the Centres had recorded the responses to all of the Likert scale questions. The data sets were cleaned by the removal of any data that had not been consistently acquired across all three Centres.

After cleaning, only data from a single year (2007) and only approximately 50% of the questions from the original questionnaires could be used to make comparisons across the three Centres. The questions that were included in this analysis related to the opinions of the visiting staff regarding the quality of the domestic and activity aspects of the provision and the participants' views on what they had gained, in terms of learning outcomes from their visit. These data came from 2,507 participants and 397 group leader responses.

Initially the data was analysed using descriptive statistics in *Microsoft Excel* software as this was the medium in which the data were collected by the three Centres. Next, a statistical analysis was undertaken using the software package *Statistics Programme for Social Sciences* (SPSS) to identify any differences in responses that existed between the three Centre's datasets.

Overall the datasets were not normally distributed and thus violated the validity of parametric methods applied to the statistical analyses of such data. Therefore non-parametric tests were required to be used (Urdan, 2001). The independent variable was chosen as the different Centres and the dependant variables were the questionnaire responses.

To ascertain whether the results represented a significant difference between the Centres, the Likert scale was transformed into numerical values by attributing the value 5 to “strongly agree, 4 to “agree” and so on (Siegel, 1956). Where respondents did not complete the question the cases were removed for the analysis of that question (Field, 2009; Pallant, 2007).

Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric tests for significance were carried out to identify whether the responses differed across the three Centres. The Kruskal-Wallis test was selected as it is appropriate for use on ordinal scale data and although the Likert scale has been transformed into numerical data, this remained only a numerical representation of the ordinal level responses, rather than being converted into true interval level data (Siegel, 1956). Kruskal-Wallis tests were also used as these are the most efficient of the non-parametric tests for more than two independent samples. It has a power-efficiency of 95.5% compared with the F-test which is the most powerful parametric test. This high level of efficiency is obtained by using more information contained within the observations as it converts scores to ranks thus preserving the magnitude of the scores more fully (Siegel, 1956).

When conducting significance tests across any three groups, the Kruskal-Wallis test only indicates whether or not a difference exists between the groups, but it does not show which groups differ from each other (Field, 2009; Siegel, 1956). In cases where there were found to be significant differences in the responses across the centres, *post hoc* tests, using Mann-Whitney tests with Bonferroni corrections, were carried out to identify between which Centres the differences existed (Field, 2009).

6.3 Results

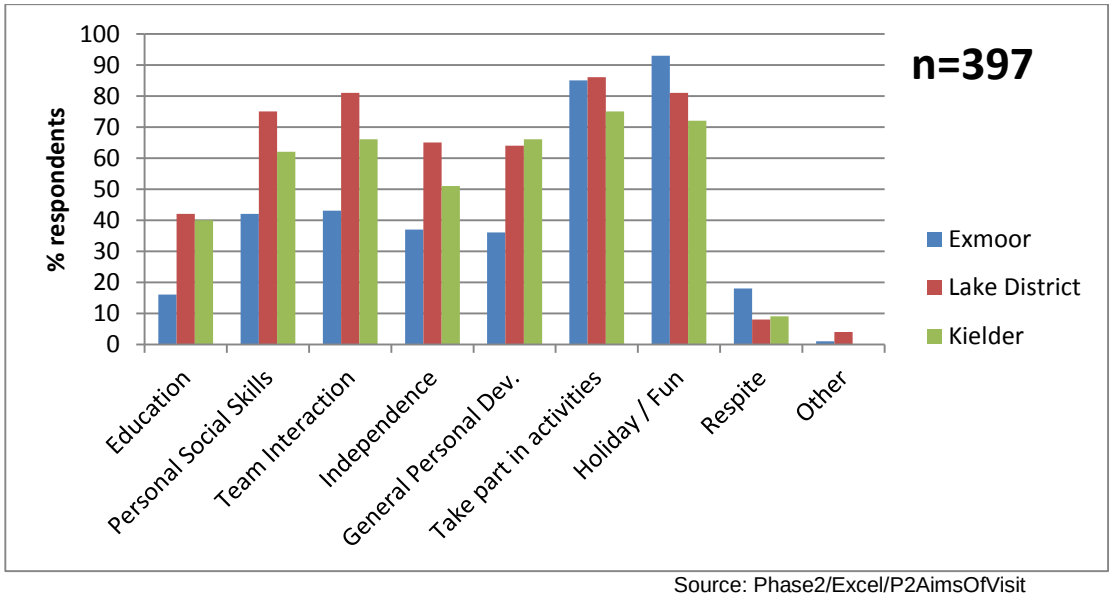
As in Phase 1, the results from the Likert scale responses demonstrated a "ceiling effect" (Cramer & Howitt, 2005, p. 21) where the majority of responses were in the *agree* and *strongly agree* categories, thus skewing the distribution towards the positive end of the continuum and distorting the distribution of responses.

6.3.1 Visiting leaders' responses

Visiting leader aims for the visit

The aims for the visit as reported by the visiting leaders are shown in Figure 6.1. Responses were chosen from a list of options and multiple choices were permitted. The average number of choices per respondent varied across the Centres. Exmoor respondents averaged 3.7 choices each with this rising to 4.4 choices at Kielder and 5.0 choices at the Lake District. The responses have been split by Centre to allow comparison across centres.

Figure 6.1: Leader aims of visit



Source: Phase2/Excel/P2AimsOfVisit

Achievement of the aims

Table 6.1 shows the degree to which the visiting leaders perceived the Centres to meet the identified aims. Overall there was a very high degree of leader satisfaction with 91% of respondents stating that all their aims had been met and this was consistent across all three Centres.

Table 6.1: Achievement of Aims

			Aims Achieved			
			Yes	Partially	No	Total
Centre	Exmoor	Count	203	18	1	222
		% within Centre	91.4%	8.1%	.5%	100.0%
	Lake District	Count	110	9	1	120
		% within Centre	91.7%	7.5%	.8%	100.0%
	Kielder	Count	47	5	0	52
		% within Centre	90.4%	9.6%	.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	360	32	2	394
		% within Centre	91.4%	8.1%	.5%	100.0%

Source: Phase2/SPSS/

Visiting leader responses to the domestic and administration questions

This section gives the results of the visiting leaders' rating of the eight elements of domestic and administrative provision under the headings of *suitability of the accommodation facilities*, their *cleanliness, comfor*t and *domestic staff*, the *food, catering staff, bookings procedure* and *administrative staff*.

Kruskal-Wallis Tests were conducted to identify whether a significant difference existed in the responses of participants across the three Centres. Where a significant difference was found to exist at the $p<0.005$ level, then *Post hoc* Mann-Whitney tests with Bonferroni corrections were conducted to identify between which Centres this difference occurred. The results of these tests are displayed in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Domestic provision Kruskal-Wallis and Mann Whitney results

Outcome	Agree+ str. agree	Kruskal-Wallis			Mann-Whitney		
	%	*H*	*df*	*p*	*U*	*z*	*r*
Domestic facilities	96.2	18.0	2	0.001	9862	4.25	0.23
Cleanliness	99.3	2.37	2	0.306			
Comfort	97.5	7.0	2	0.029	11205	2.65	0.14
Domestic staff	94.5	8.0	2	0.018	2212.5	2.55	0.20
Food	93.4	0.07	2	0.998			
Catering staff	95.4	12.2	2	0.002	2011.5	3.53	0.28
Admin staff	95.6	6.5	2	0.035	10900.5	2.53	0.14
Bookings efficient	93.2	6.6	2	0.037	2157	2.53	0.16

H = Kruskal-Wallis test statistic
df = Degrees of freedom
p = Significance
U = Mann-Whitney test statistic
z = Standard score
r = Pearson's correlation Effect Size

Through column *p,* Table 6.2 shows that a significant difference existed at the p<0.05 level across the Centres in the responses to all questions, with the exception of those relating to the *cleanliness* and *enjoyment of food*. However, it can be seen that the effect size *r* ranges between 0.14 and 0.28 and J. Cohen (1977) gives the following descriptive guidelines for the Pearson's correlation "*r"* effect size as small (0.10), medium (0.30) and large (0.50) when applied to the social sciences, so the effect sizes of these differences are only small to medium. Between which Centres the difference existed was identified by *post-hoc* Mann-Whitney tests and the results are shown in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Centres between which domestic differences existed

Outcome	Effect size *r*	Significantly greater agreement	Significantly less agreement
Domestic facilities	0.23	Lake District	Kielder & Exmoor
Comfort	0.14	Lake District	Exmoor
Domestic staff	0.20	Lake District & Exmoor	Kielder
Catering staff	0.28	Lake District	Kielder
Admin staff	0.14	Lake District	Kielder & Exmoor
Bookings efficient	0.16	Lake District	Kielder & Exmoor

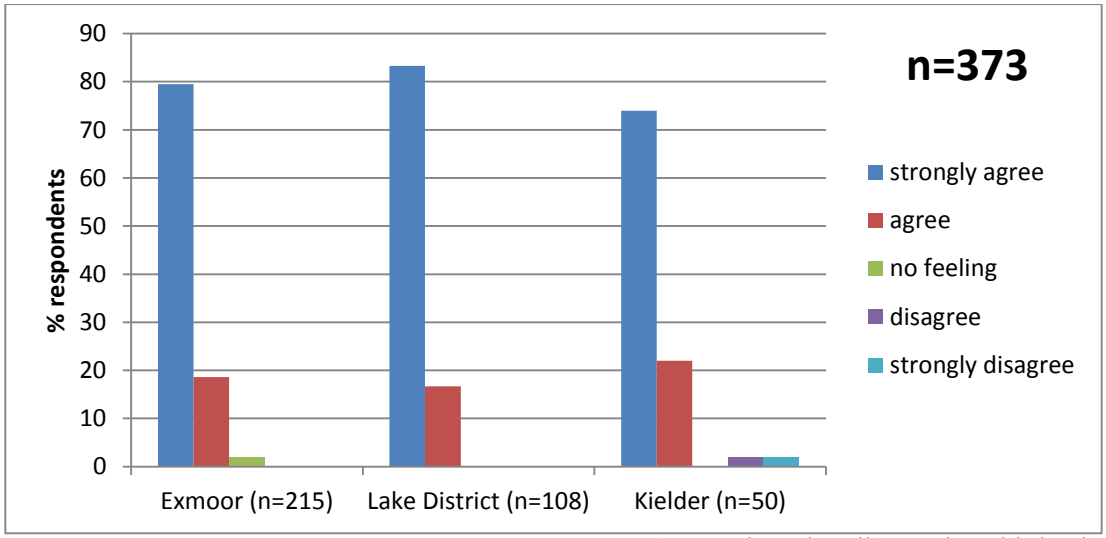
Visiting leader responses to the activity provision questions

The next section gives the results of the visiting leaders' rating of the five elements of the activity provision under the headings of *suitability of the equipment and facilities*, the *appropriateness of the activities*, the *suitability of the evening activities*, the *level of challenge* and the *professionalism of the instructional staff*.

Suitability of the activities equipment and facilities

The visiting leaders were asked if during their visit they *found the activity equipment / facilities suitable.* There were 24 missing responses to this question and the distributions of the remaining 373 responses are shown for each Centre in Figure 6.2. Overall, 98% of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the activity equipment / facilities were suitable with no significant differences across the Centres at a $p<0.05$ level.

Figure 6.2: Suitability of the activities equipment and facilities

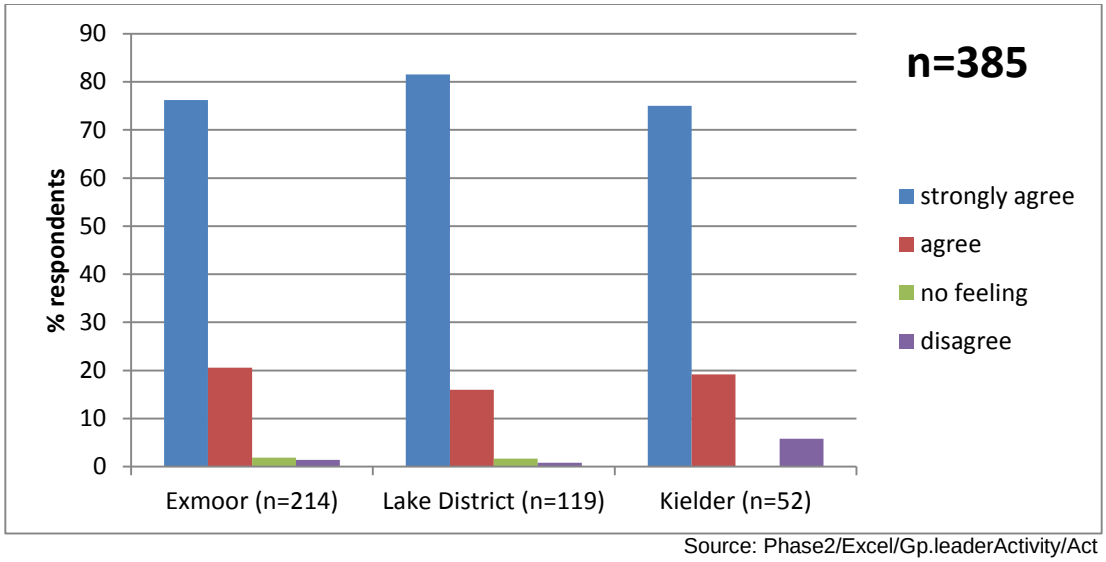


Source: Phase2/Excel/Gp.LeaderActivity/Equip

Appropriateness of the activities

The visiting leaders were asked if they *found the activity programme appropriate.* There were 12 missing responses and the distributions of the remaining 385 responses are shown for each Centre in Figure 6.3. Overall, 97% of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the activity programme was appropriate with no significant differences across the Centres at a $p<0.05$ level.

Figure 6.3: Appropriateness of the activities

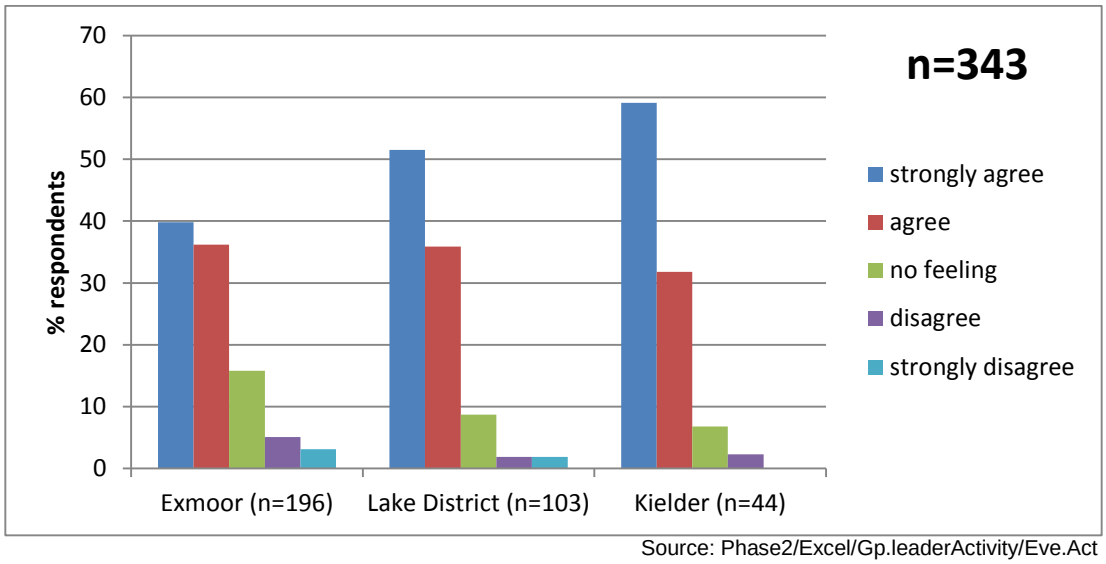


Source: Phase2/Excel/Gp.leaderActivity/Act

Suitability of the evening activities

The visiting leaders were asked if they *found the evening activities appropriate.* There were 54 missing responses and the distributions of the remaining 343 responses are shown for each Centre in Figure 6.4. Overall, 81% of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the evening activities were appropriate.

Figure 6.4: Suitability of the evening activities



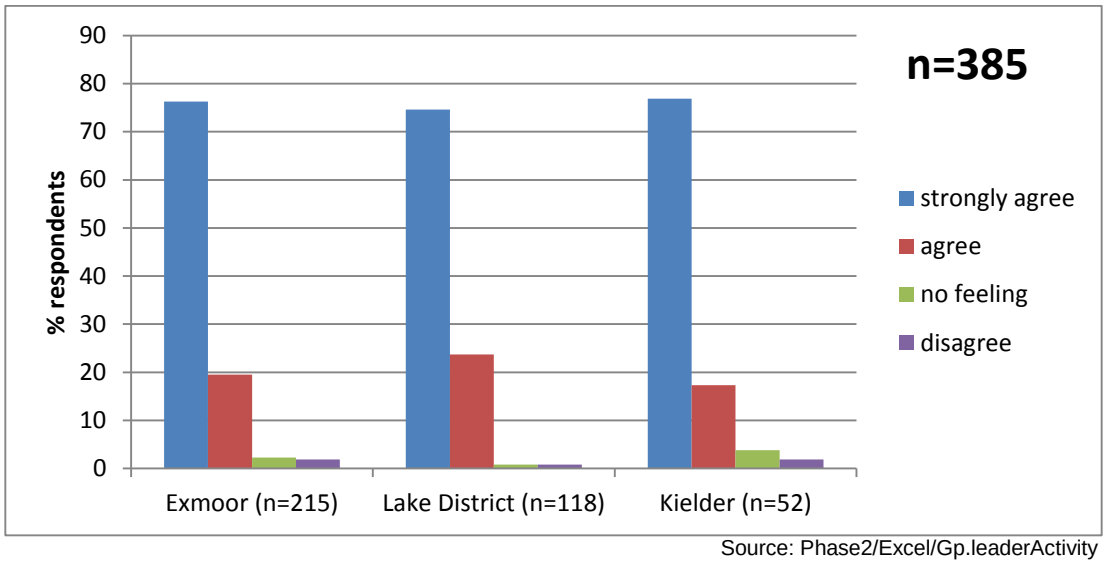
Source: Phase2/Excel/Gp.leaderActivity/Eve.Act

A Kruskal-Wallis Test revealed there were significant differences across the three Centres ($H(2)=10.5$, $p=0.005$). *Post hoc* Mann-Whitney tests with Bonferroni correction demonstrated significantly less agreement by Exmoor leaders that the evening activities were suitable in comparison to the leaders from the other two Centres. However, the effect size was small ($U=3281$, $z=2.65$ $r=0.17$).

Challenge of the activities

The visiting leaders were asked if they *found the activities challenging.* There were 12 missing responses and the distributions of the remaining 385 responses are shown for each Centre in Figure 6.5. Overall, 96% of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the activities were challenging with no significant differences across the Centres at a $p<0.05$ level.

Figure 6.5: Challenge of the activities

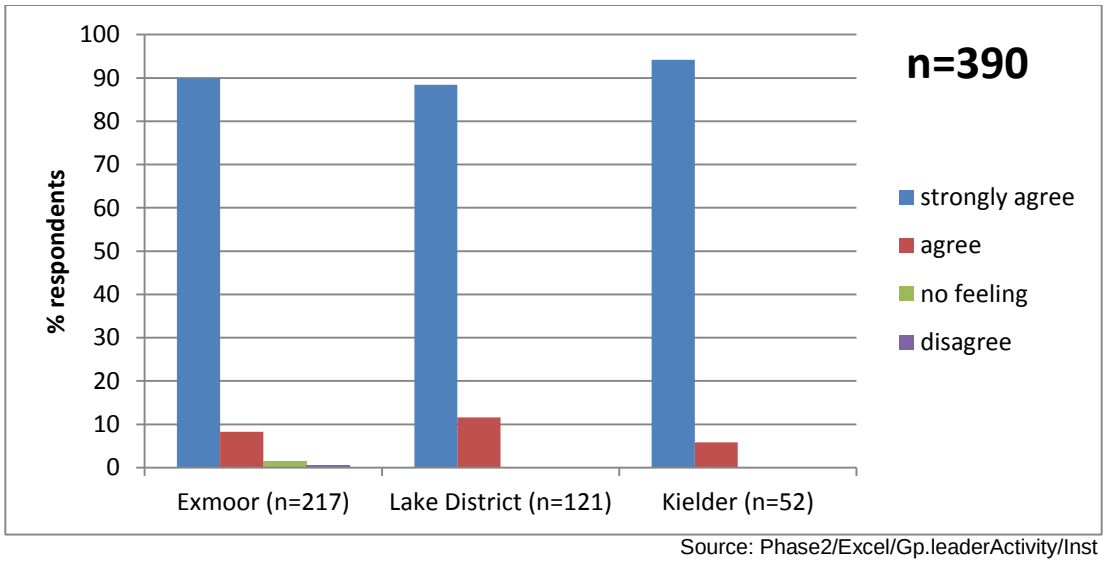


Source: Phase2/Excel/Gp.leaderActivity

Instructional staff

The visiting leaders were asked if they *found the instructors were professional and friendly.* There were 7 missing responses and the distributions of the remaining 390 responses are shown for each Centre in Figure 6.6. Overall, 99% of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the instructors were professional and friendly with no significant differences across the Centres at a $p<0.05$ level.

Figure 6.6: The instructors were professional and friendly



Source: Phase2/Excel/Gp.leaderActivity/Inst

6.3.2 Participant responses

Disability categories of participants

The participants were asked to identify which one of four categories of disability would best identify themselves as having. The distributions of these are shown for each Centre in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Disability of participants

Centre	N	Physical	Learning	Behavioural	Sensory
Exmoor	n = 1009	42%	41%	9%	9%
Lake District	n = 175	34%	51%	10%	3%
Kielder	n = 229	27%	49%	9%	14%

Source: Phase2/Excel/P2 3-CentreDisability

The disability categories used to create the above profile of respondents in this evaluation differed from the disability information collected by the Centres when collecting demographic data for their visitors. As a result it is not possible to comment on the representativeness of this sample for overall Centre use. Nonetheless, the overall disability profile of visitors for the Exmoor and the Lake District Centres are broadly similar to those reported in Table 6.4 whilst at Kielder the demographics information relating to visitors had a higher percentage of those with physical disabilities (49%) and lower percentage of those with intellectual disabilities (19%).

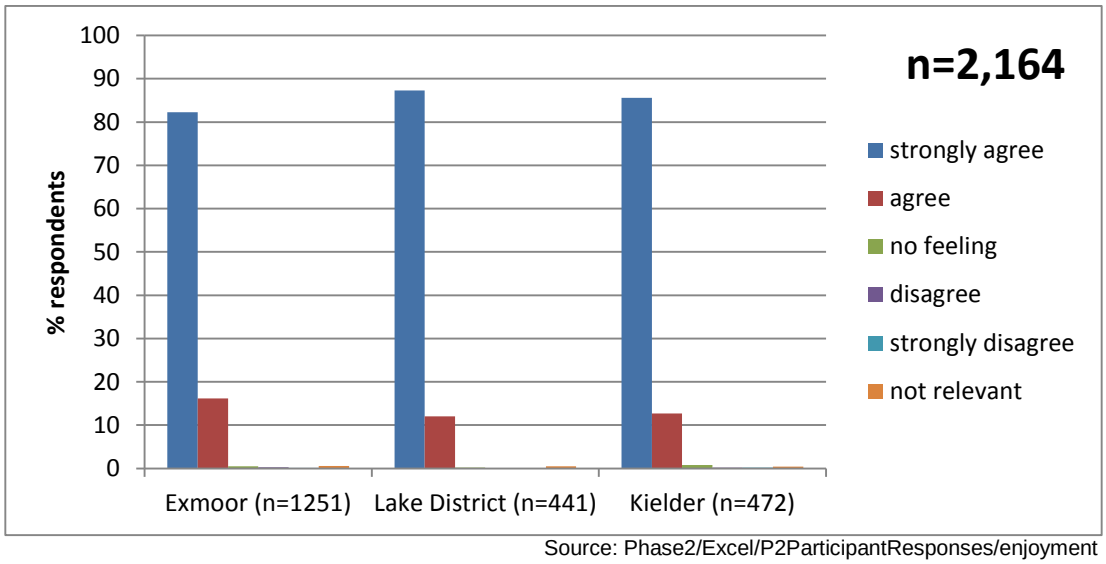
Participant responses to statements

The following section gives the results of the participants' rating of eight aspects of their visit relating to outcomes from participation under the headings of *enjoyment, challenge, sense of achievement / realisation of ability, independence, transferability to the home environment, self-esteem, awareness of the needs of others* and *communication skills*.

Enjoyment of visit

Participants were asked if they had *enjoyed their visit*. There were 343 missing responses to this question. Of the remaining 2,164 respondents, 99.2% of visitors either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they had had an enjoyable visit. The distributions of these are shown for each Centre in Figure 6.7.

Figure 6.7: Enjoyment of visit

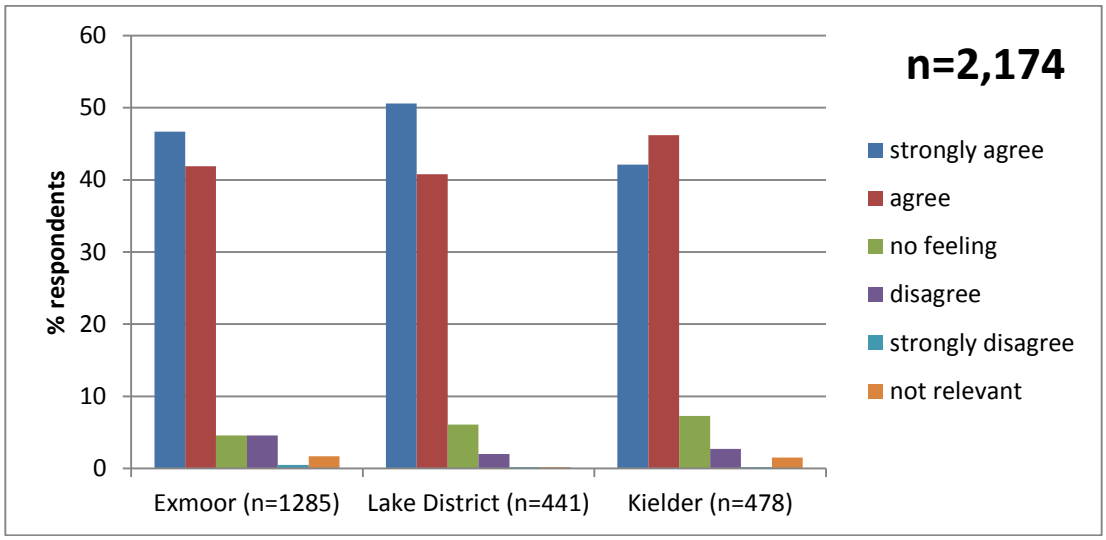


Source: Phase2/Excel/P2ParticipantResponses/enjoyment

Level of challenge

Participants were asked if they had *found the activities challenging.* There were 303 missing responses to this question. Of the remaining 2,174 respondents 89.1% either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they had found the activities challenging and 1.4% respondents considered this question to be *not relevant*. The distributions of these are shown for each Centre in Figure 6.8.

Figure 6.8: The activities were challenging to participants

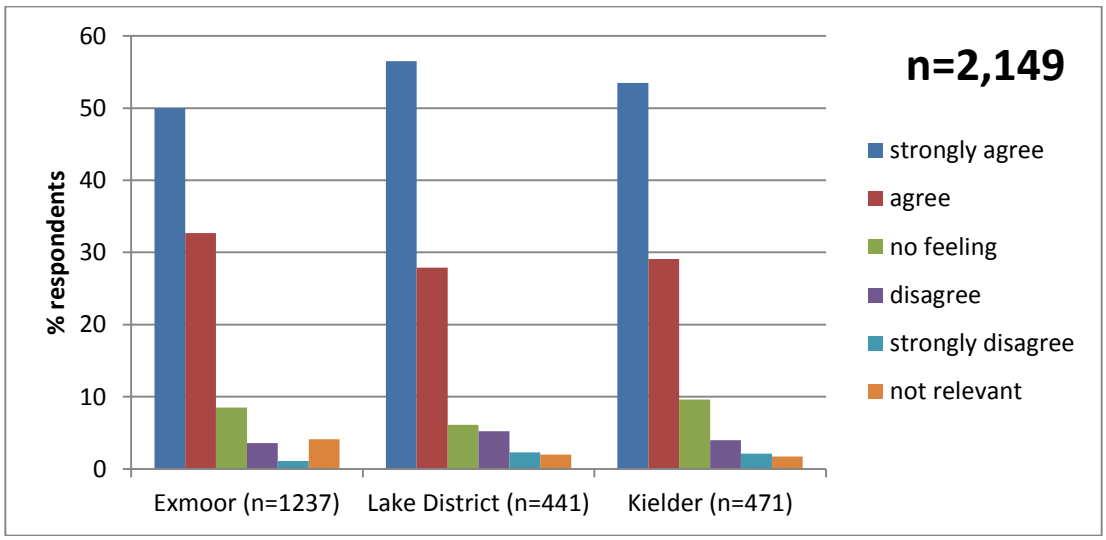


Source: Phase2/Excel/P2ParticipantResponses/challenge

Realisation of ability / achievement

Participants were asked if they had *done things they did not think were possible.* There were 358 missing responses to this question. Of the remaining 2,149 respondents, 83% either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they had done things they thought they could not do whilst 3.2% considered this question *not relevant*. The distributions of these are shown for each Centre in Figure 6.9.

Figure 6.9: Sense of achievement

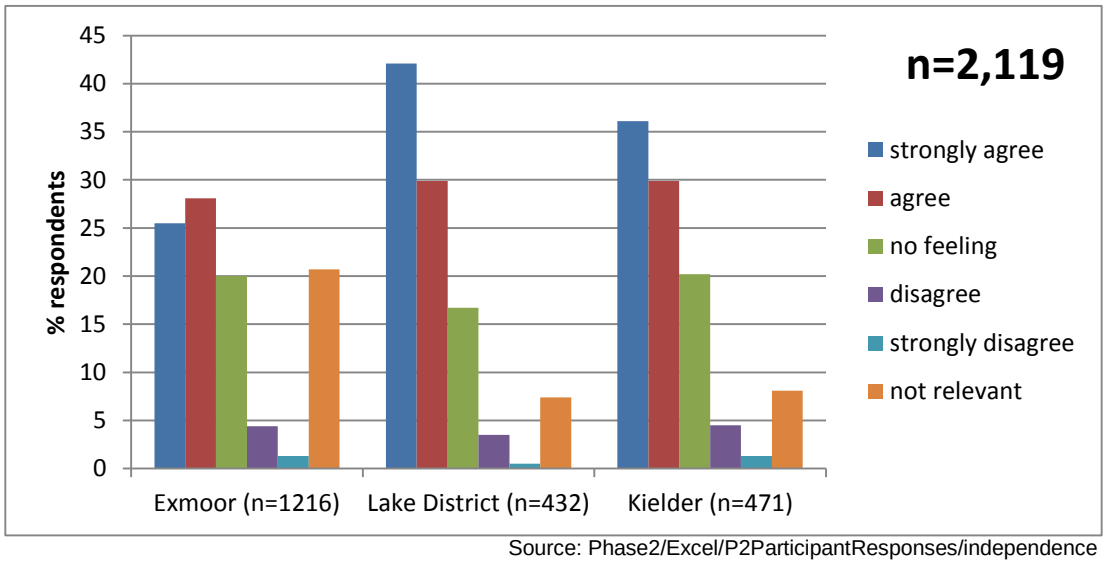


Source: Phase2/Excel/P2ParticipantResponses/achievement

Development of independence

Participants were asked if following their stay at the Centre they *could do more things by themselves.* There were 388 missing responses to this question. Of the remaining 2,119 respondents, 70.8% either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they could do more by themselves. A large number of respondents (15.2% / n=322) considered this question *not relevant* with the majority of these from Exmoor where over 20% (n=252) of the respondents considered this question not to be relevant. (The non-responses to all questions are shown at the end of this section and the issue is discussed in Section 6.4 below.) The distributions of these are shown for each Centre in Figure 6.10.

Figure 6.10: Increased independence



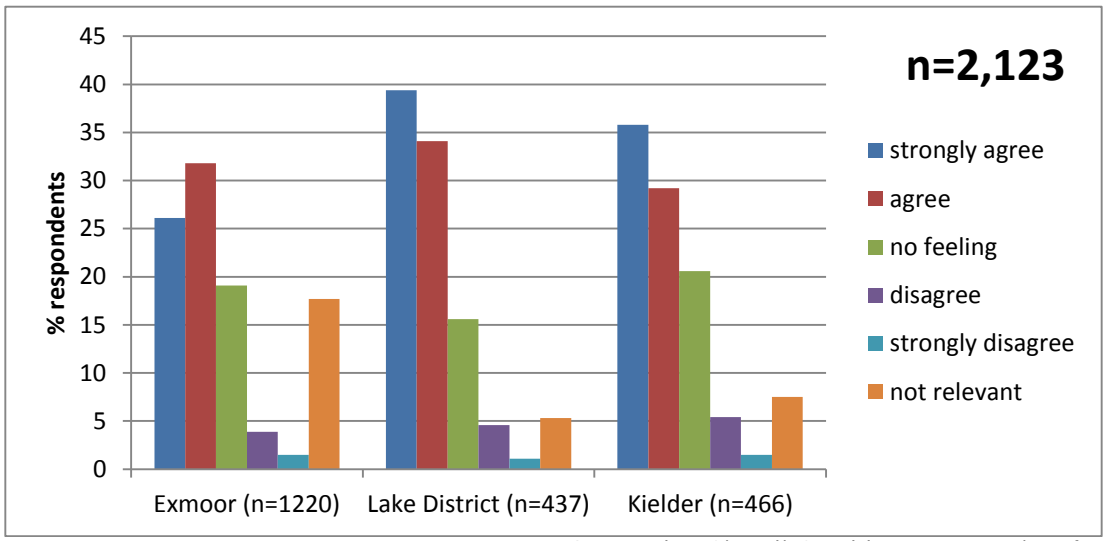
Source: Phase2/Excel/P2ParticipantResponses/independence

Transferability to the home environment

Participants were asked if the factors reported in the previous three statements (above) *would be of benefit when they returned home.* There were 384 missing responses to this question. Of the remaining 2,123 respondents, 62.6% either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that finding the activities challenging, doing things they did not think possible and being able to do more by themselves would be of benefit when they returned home. A large number of respondents (12.9% / n=274) considered this question *not*

relevant with the majority of these from Exmoor where over 17% (n=216) of the respondents considered this question not to be relevant. The distributions of these are shown for each Centre in Figure 6.11.

Figure 6.11: Transferability

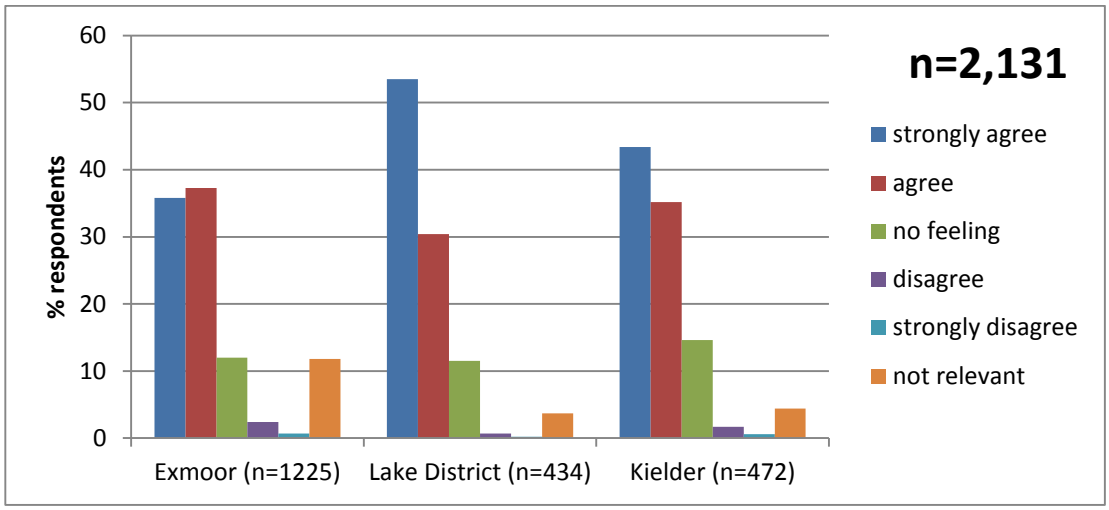


Source: Phase2/Excel/P2ParticipantResponses/transfer

Self-esteem

Participants were asked if whilst at the Centre they *felt better about themselves.* There were 376 missing responses to this question. Of the remaining 2,131 respondents, 76.5% either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they felt better about themselves. A number of respondents (8.5% / n=181) considered this question *not relevant* with the majority of these from Exmoor where 11.8% (n=144) of the respondents considered this question not to be relevant. The distributions of these are shown for each Centre in Figure 6.12.

Figure 6.12: Self-esteem

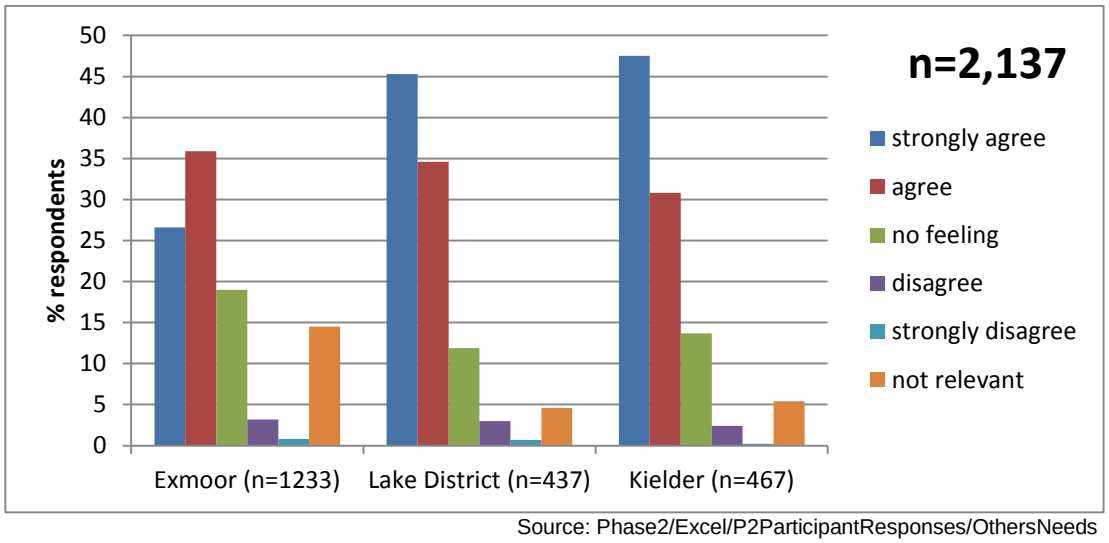


Source: Phase2/Excel/P2ParticipantResponses/self-esteem

Awareness of the needs of others

Participants were asked if that through their visit they had become *more aware of the needs of others.* There were 370 (14.8%) missing responses to this question. Of the remaining 2,137 respondents, 77.7% either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that following their visit that they were more aware of others' needs. A number (10.5% / n=224) considered this question *not relevant* with the majority of these from Exmoor where 14.5% (n=179) of the respondents considered this question not to be relevant. The distributions of these are shown for each Centre in Figure 6.13.

Figure 6.13: Awareness of needs of others

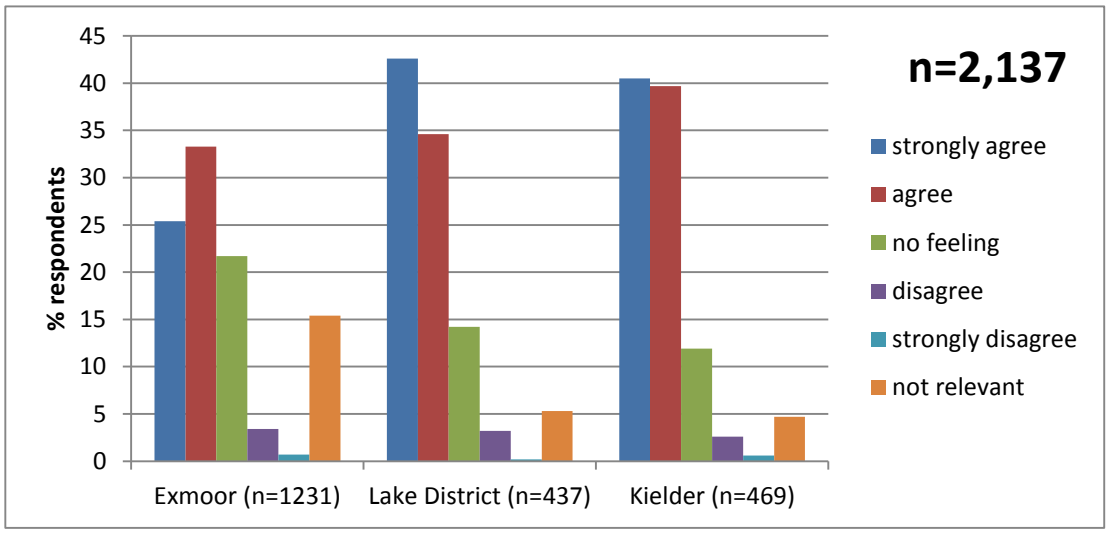


Source: Phase2/Excel/P2ParticipantResponses/OthersNeeds

Improved communication skills

Participants were asked if they had *improved their communication skills* whilst at the Centre. There were 370 missing responses to this question. Of the remaining 2,137 respondents, 75.5% either *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they had developed their communication skills. A number (11% / n=235) considered this question *not relevant* with the majority of these from Exmoor where 15.4% (n=190) of the respondents considered this question not to be relevant. The distributions of these are shown for each Centre in Figure 6.14.

Figure 6.14: Communication skills



Source: Phase2/Excel/P2ParticipantResponses/communications

Significance testing

A Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to identify whether a significant difference existed in the responses of participants across the three Centres. Where a significant difference was found to exist at the $p<0.005$ level, then *Post hoc* Mann-Whitney tests with Bonferroni corrections were conducted to identify between which Centres this difference occurred. The results of these tests are displayed in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5: Participant outcomes Kruskal-Wallis and Mann Whitney results

Outcome	Agree+ str. agree	Kruskal-Wallis			Mann-Whitney		
	%	*H*	*df*	*p*	*U*	*z*	*r*
Enjoyable visit	99.2	7.0	2	0.031	259480	2.45	0.06
Level of Challenge	89.1	5.8	2	0.056			
Realisation of ability	85.7	2.1	2	0.354			
Developed independence	70.8	25.2	2	<0.0005	161685	4.95	0.13
Help when home	62.6	13.1	2	0.001	178816	3.53	0.10
Improved self-esteem	76.5	24.2	2	<0.0005	83852	3.09	0.11
Awareness of needs of others	77.7	113.3	2	<0.0005	178763	5.90	0.18
Communication	75.5	110.3	2	0.001	189288	6.06	0.16

H = Kruskal-Wallis test statistic
df = Degrees of freedom
p = Significance

U = Mann-Whitney test statistic
z = Standard score
r = Pearson's correlation Effect Size

Through column *p,* Table 6.5 shows that a significant difference existed at the p<0.05 level across the Centres in the responses to all questions, with the exception of those questions relating to the *level of challenge* and the *realisation of ability*. However, it can be seen that the Pearson's correlation effect size *r* ranges between 0.06 and 0.18 and Cohen (1977) gives the following descriptive guidelines for the Pearson's correlation effect size as small (0.10), medium (0.30) and large (0.50) when applied to the social sciences. Thus although the differences were significant the effect sizes were either small or small to medium with the exception of *enjoyment* when the effect size was very small with the difference considered unimportant. The Centres between which the difference existed was identified by *post-hoc* Mann-Whitney tests and these results are shown in Table 6.6.

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Table 6.6: Centres between which participant outcome differences existed

Outcome	Effect size *r*	Significantly greater agreement	Significantly less agreement
Enjoyable visit	0.06	Lake District	Exmoor
Developed independence	0.13	Lake District	Exmoor
Help when home	0.10	Lake District	Exmoor
Improved self-esteem	0.11	Lake District	Kielder & Exmoor
Awareness of needs of others	0.18	Lake District & Kielder	Exmoor
Communication	0.16	Lake District & Kielder	Exmoor

6.3.3 Missing and not relevant responses

Across the Centres there were large differences in the number of *missing responses* to the personal development questions. There were proportionally a greater number of *missing responses* from the Exmoor and Kielder Centres than the Lake District Centre. In addition there were notable differences across the Centres in the number of respondents who deemed the question *not relevant*, with the greatest difference Exmoor between and the other two Centres. Both the *missing responses* and the *not relevant* responses are shown in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7: Missing and not relevant responses

	Exmoor			Lake District			Kielder		
	Missing	**Not rel.**	**Total**	**Missing**	**Not rel.**	**Total**	**Missing**	**Not rel.**	**Total**
	%	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Enjoyable visit	17.8	0.5	**18.3**	0	0.5	**0.5**	13.2	0.4	**13.6**
Level of Challenge	15.6	1.4	**17.0**	0.2	0.0	**0.2**	12.1	1.3	**13.4**
Realisation of ability	18.7	3.4	**22.1**	0.0	2.0	**2.0**	13.4	1.5	**14.9**
Developed independence	20.1	16.6	**36.7**	2.0	7.3	**9.3**	13.4	7	**20.4**
Help when home	19.8	14.2	**34.0**	0.9	5.2	**6.1**	14.3	6.4	**20.8**
Improved self-esteem	19.5	9.5	**29.0**	1.6	3.6	**5.2**	13.2	3.9	**17.1**
Awareness of needs of others	19.0	11.8	**30.7**	0.9	4.5	**5.4**	14.2	4.6	**18.8**
Communication	19.1	12.5	**31.6**	0.9	5.2	**6.1**	13.8	4.0	**17.8**

6.3.4 Comparison of leader and participant perspectives

The largest number of responses from both the participants (1,522) and the visiting leaders (222) was found in the Exmoor Centre. This Centre also had the most complete dataset which included a record of the responses by the participants on those statements relating to aspects of the provision that had also been recorded for the visiting leaders, but were absent from the other two Centres' data files. These responses were compared to ascertain the degree of association between the responses from the participants and the leaders. This could be used as an indicator of the reliability of the responses from the different viewpoints and thus the validity of using the visiting leaders as representative of the opinions of participants. The responses were analysed using descriptive statistics, plotting the results on graphs and comparing patterns of response. Mann-Whitney non-parametric tests for significance were also carried out. The Mann-Whitney test was selected as it is appropriate for use on categorical scale data and although the Likert scale has been transformed into numerical data, this remains only a numerical

representation of the categorical level data chosen on the Likert scale and thus is suitable for analysis using this technique (Field, 2009).

Domestic provision

The descriptive statistics and plotted graphs showed a remarkable similarity in levels of agreement on all aspects of the domestic provision (see Figures 6.15 to 6.19) and this was supported by the statistical analysis which showed no significant differences between any aspects of the provision between the leaders and participants.

Figure 6.15: Cleanliness

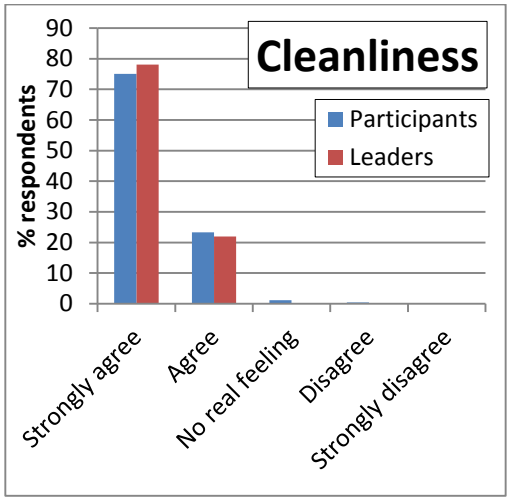


Figure 6.16: Comfort

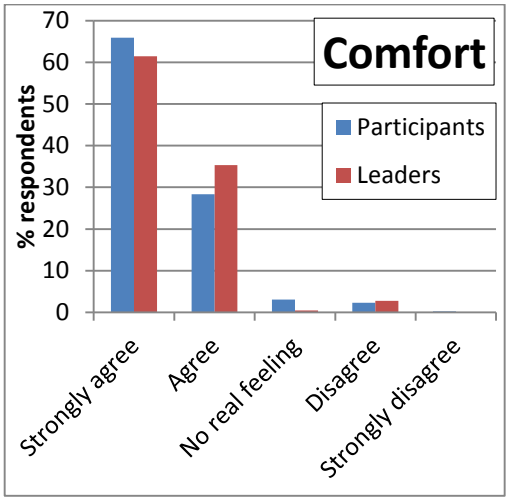


Figure 6.17: Food

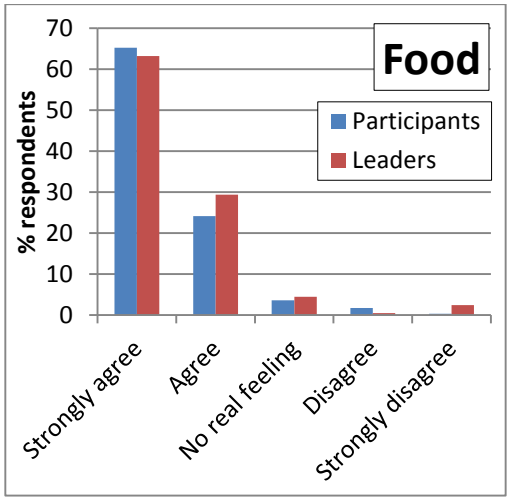
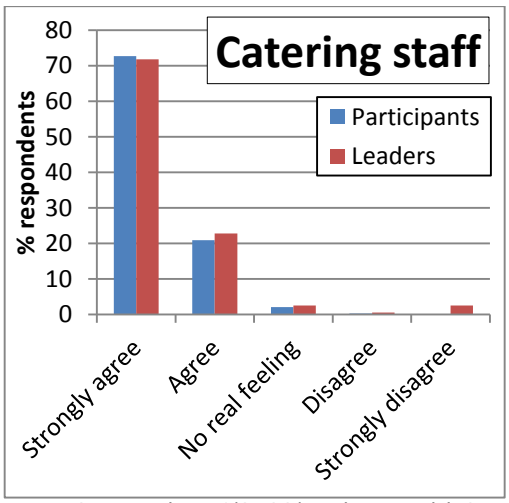
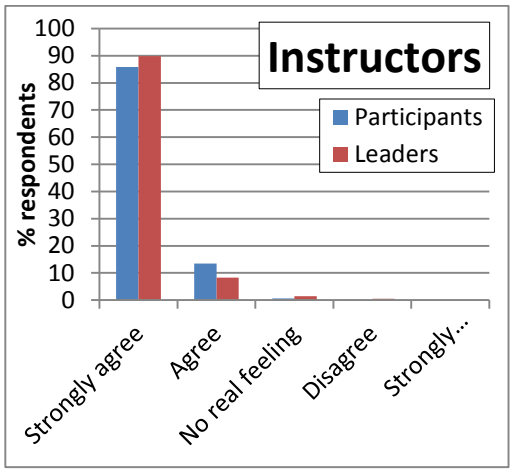


Figure 6.18: Catering staff



Source: Phase 2/SPSS/LeaderToParticipStat

Figure 6.19: Instructors



Activity provision

The comparison of the plotted results indicated that there was a difference between the participants and the leaders' perception of the suitability and enjoyment of the *evening activities* and the perception of *challenge* in the programme (see

Figure 6.20 and Figure 6.21). Mann-Whitney tests showed that these differences were significant with the participants being more satisfied with the evening activities than the leaders (U=94896, p=0.001, z=3.18, r=0.09). The participants considered that the activities were not as challenging compared to the perception of their leaders (U=96506.5, p<0.0005, z=7.13, r=0.19).

Figure 6.20: Evening activities

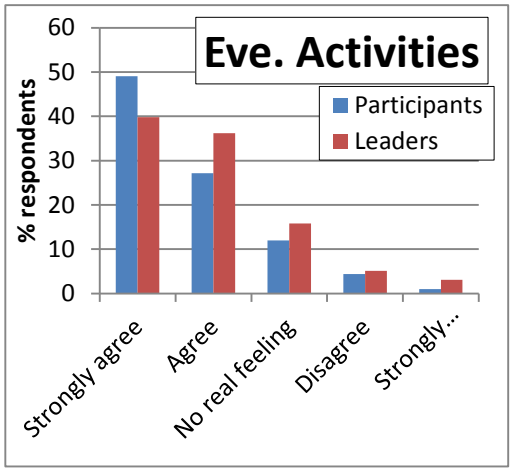
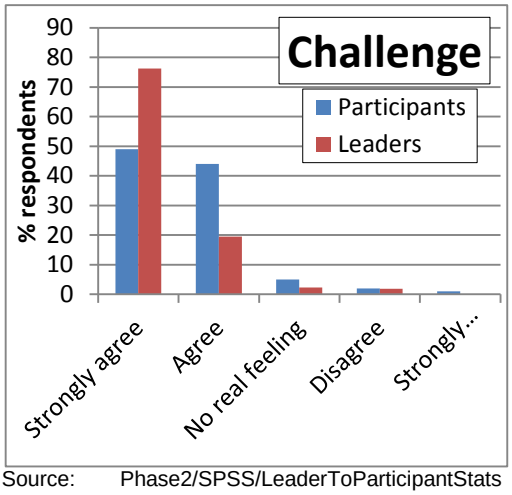


Figure 6.21: Challenge



Source: Phase2/SPSS/LeaderToParticipantStats

6.4 Discussion

Although a significant difference existed in the responses between Centres, the effect size was often small. Salkind (2000, p. 18) notes that as well as being statistically significant the differences have to be meaningful, a concept that Bakeman (1992, p. 168) refers to as “real world significance”. Lipsey, et al. (2012) emphasise the need for caution when using Cohen’s (1977) description of effect sizes as “small, medium and large” as Cohen himself highlighted their inappropriateness for general use. These effect size descriptors refer to the distribution of all social and behavioural research and because of this it is misleading to use these descriptions for studies in areas where only “small” effect sizes are the norm. Lipsey, et al. (p.4) cite educational outcomes as an example where small effect sizes occur and they recommend that comparisons should be made to effect sizes for “comparable outcome measures from comparable interventions targeted on comparable samples”. In these circumstances even a small effect size can be important particularly “if the outcome is difficult to change or highly valued” (Neill, 2003a, p. 318).

In their meta-analysis of outdoor education Cason & Gillis (1994) reported an average effect size of 0.31. The average effect size fell to 0.17 for short

duration programmes and this was the category into which the Calvert Trust courses would have been placed by the definition used by Cason & Gillis. Hattie, et al. (1997) reported an average effect size of 0.34 from their meta-analysis of 96 studies, however over 80% of these were of programme duration in excess of 3 weeks and under 10% of the studies reported on were on similar length programmes (2-7 days) to those offered at the Calvert Trust Centres. For non-Outward Bound programmes the average effect size dropped to 0.17. A large majority of the non-Outward Bound providers offered programmes of considerably shorter length than Outward Bound.

In this study of post-course evaluations, pre-intervention testing had not been completed. Pre-test/post-test data for the Calvert Trust would have been of considerable interest and would have allowed direct comparisons to the results of the above studies to be made. In the absence of these data, comparisons were made across the three Calvert Trust Centres and the effect sizes of the differences have been reported in the results. Although these differences were not large they were statistically significant at the $p<0.05$ level. No other studies have been found that make similar measurements of the differences between centres, with which to compare the results. As a result, the differences across the Calvert Trust Centres can only be considered in relation to the effect sizes reported in other studies into outdoor education (e.g. Cason & Gillis, 1994; Hattie, et al., 1997) and the differences are both significant and important particularly in relation to *independence, transferability, self-esteem, awareness of the needs of others* and *communication*.

There were notable differences in the aims of the visit across the three Centres as may be seen in Figure 6.1. In comparison to the other two Centres, the profile of responses from Exmoor tended away from the developmental outcomes and towards recreational and enjoyment outcomes. This is likely to be a reflection of the customer sector attending that Centre and may have a direct impact on the differing profile of the responses by participants with regard to the learning outcomes obtained through their

experiences. The bias of organisations being the only respondents at the Kielder Centre is likely to have created an artificially high level of responses in aims relating to *education* and across the *personal development* categories and artificially low on aims relating to *holiday / fun* and *respite care,* both of which are considered to be important market sectors for this Centre (see Chapter 1, Section 1.5.5). The high level of reporting of personal development outcomes by the Lake District Centre respondents would be expected as the market sector for this Centre was schools and other organisations, many of which had personal development agendas. There was a similarity in the profile of the Lake District responses to the organisations that visit Kielder and this may be expected as these respondents are likely to be similar in aims of participation. The higher number of choices of aims by the Lake District and Kielder organisation respondents might be attributed to the wide range of personal development outcomes sought by these organisations that were included in the categories on offer and these elements were not relevant to those on holiday.

Irrespective of what the differences in the intended aims, all three Centres were seen to meet the aims of their visitors to a very high degree. Over 90% of visiting leaders from each of the Centres stated that their aims had been met and the remainder (with the exception of two) stating their aims had at least been partly met (see Table 6.1).

In comparison to the other two Centres, the Lake District Centre was rated as high or higher by visiting leaders across a range of eight attributes relating to the domestic and administrative provision. This may be attributable to the leaders visiting Kielder and Exmoor having higher expectations and thus being less satisfied with the provision offered. Alternatively, the publicity materials may have created an impression of the standard of the facilities beyond that which was experienced in reality thus generating expectations that were not met. Understanding of the value to customers of specific aspects of provision and the management of customer expectations are recognised as important factors in ensuring high levels of customer

satisfaction in marketing (Martilla & James, 1977) and for recreational service industries (D. Murray & Howat, 2002). The difference in visiting leader satisfaction across the Calvert Trust Centres could relate to the differing needs or expectations of the customer sectors targeted by the individual Centres. Although the quality of the domestic and administrative provision is likely to be of value to visitors and contribute to the overall experience these aspects are unlikely to make an impact on the learning outcomes of the outdoor education experience.

In Phase 1 of this study, at the Lake District Centre both the visiting leaders and the instructors identified *challenge* and *achievement* as the factors that contributed to the delivery of the beneficial outcomes associated with the outdoor activities. This concurred with the learning theory where dissonance is created through the challenge of undertaking a task that was initially perceived as unachievable and the successful achievement of this task changed the perceptions of that which was possible for the individual (Luckner & Nadler, 1997).

Both the participants and the leaders regarded the activities as challenging and the participants considered that they had achieved things they did not think were possible. There were no significant differences in either the perceived level of challenge or the sense of achievement across the Centres, however, there were statistically significant differences at the $p<0.05$level, although these were small in the developmental outcomes of *communications*, *social/teamwork, self-esteem, independence* and *transferability of skills*. The Lake District Centre was generally found to have made the greatest difference and Exmoor generally found to make the least difference (see Section 6.3.2, above).

The only significant difference found across the Centres with respect to the activity provision related to the *suitability/enjoyment of the evening activities*. As the nature of these activities were mainly unstructured or semi-structured social activities, with only the Lake District offering structured activities for

two evenings for each group, the evening programme was unlikely to have affected the learning outcomes for the participants.

Outdoor education theory asserts that there are two other aspects of programmes that can affect the learning outcomes. Firstly, the sequencing of the activities within a programme (Beard & Wilson, 2006; Bisson, 1999; Schoel, et al., 1988) as through the sequencing, the level of challenge offered may be progressively increased thus maintaining the degree of dissonance throughout the programme. At the Calvert Trust Centres the sequencing of the activities was variable through necessity as there were insufficient resources to enable any optimal programme sequence to be delivered to all participants. As discussed in Phase 1 of this study an instructor may structure the delivery of each activity in a way that would maintain a degree of dissonance. This approach would require a continuity of participants and instructors for it to be successful so this would only be possible in the Lake District Centre.

Secondly, the process of reflection on the experience and the outcomes can help an individual to assimilate what they have learned. As has been outlined in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.1, in the majority of situations, some form of assistance will help the learner interpret elements of the experience and process the learning (S. L. Hutchinson & Dattilo, 2001; Phipps & Claxton, 1997; Priest, 1995; Witman, 1993). This will be particularly so for participants using the activities for recreational purposes or those with intellectual impairments as neither group may naturally focus on the potential learning outcomes. The differences across the Centres may be attributable to the emphasis given to this reviewing of the activities and the time given to reflection, which had only been observed in the Lake District Centre.

It is suggested that following this phase of the research that the differences in the outcomes across the Centres may be associated with the different processes involved in the delivery of the activities. Although there was no difference in the level of challenge or achievement the Lake District

instructional staff may have developed the level of challenge through the activities so maintaining a level of dissonance, or they may have engaged more in the review of the experiences with participants which helped each individual to recognise their learning outcomes.

Alternatively the differences in the learning outcomes could be attributable to the differences in the participants themselves and that these differences have caused the variations in outcomes. In the Phase 1 study into the Lake District Centre differences in the aims and outcomes were found across the recreational, rehabilitation and educational customer sectors. In Phase 2, differences in the aims of customers have been found across the three Centres along with differences in the learning outcomes. Hence it may be the differences in aims were the factor causing the differences in outcomes.

The argument that the differences in *the people* as participants rather than *the process* influencing the variations in outcomes across the Centres was supported by the number of participants not answering the question, or the choice of response *not relevant* to those questions relating to the personal development outcomes. The response of not answering / not relevant to these questions was far higher by Exmoor participants than from participants attending the other two Centres. The question referring to *independence* had the highest non-response with over 15% of respondents not answering the question and over 20% of Exmoor's respondents deciding that the question was not relevant. In addition a further 20% of Exmoor participants reported that they had no feeling as to whether they felt more independent.

The high number of non-responses or responses of *not relevant* to the personal development questions in general and on the issue of developing independence in particular at the Exmoor Centre needs to be better understood. It has been established (above) that the aims of many of those attending the Exmoor Centre were recreational in nature and this may have a direct impact on the outcomes, as has been seen in Phase 1. Participants on recreational programmes, along with those accompanying them, are less

likely to be seeking personal development outcomes and therefore might feel that gains in these areas are not expected and therefore not relevant to them. The instructors should be aware of the potential learning outcomes that might be obtained through outdoor education and should integrate explicit learning moments into the activities and spend time reflecting on that which has been achieved in order for participants to realise the personal development benefits gained through participation. If this does not occur then the learning opportunities have been lost with the possible result that there would be no awareness of the benefit in the mind of the participant and therefore no relevance to the question for them.

There was a high level of agreement between the visiting leaders and the participants attending the Exmoor Centre in their satisfaction with the domestic facilities and staff. However there were significant differences between the visiting leaders and participants opinions with respect to the *suitability of the evening activities* and the *level of challenge* in the activities. Therefore although visiting leaders may be able to reflect or represent participants' views in certain areas, this comparison emphasises the importance of ensuring that the voices of the participants are heard as well, as recommended by many writers in the field (e.g. Allison & Pomeroy, 2000; Barrett & Greenaway, 1996; Brodin & Stancheva-Popkostadinova, 2009; Coyne, 2010).

6.5 Summary

The secondary data analyses of the visiting leaders' and participants' post-course evaluation questionnaires presented above have gone some way towards addressing the research questions identified in Chapter 4, but not as far as there was the potential to do so if there had been more complete recording of the data.

The study has shown the degree of agreement by participants with statements linked to key benefits for people with disabilities participating in the outdoor activities provided by the three Calvert Trust Centres. The

average responses across all three Centres showed a high level of agreement that participants were challenged (89%) and that they achieved things that they thought were not possible (83%). There was also a level of agreement that they were more aware of the needs of others (78%), that they felt better about themselves (77%) and that they had improved their communication skills (76%). There was less agreement that participants felt more independent (71%) or that these skills were transferrable to the home environment (63%). The results were compared across the three Centres with significant differences found in the responses to a number of these statements, with the Lake District Centre providing greater agreement on the personal development outcomes (*independence, self-esteem, transfer to the home environment, awareness of others* and *communications*) and the Exmoor Centre least so. These findings may be attributable to the differences in the learning process or differences in the aspirations of the people attending the different Centres.

The study has also shown the degree of agreement by leaders who accompanied the participants with statements relating to various aspects of the activity delivery and aspects of the domestic provision. The analysis demonstrated that there were no significant differences between the responses across the three Centres in terms of the visiting leaders' opinion of the activity provision with the exception of the evening activities, however, there were significant differences across the Centres in a number of the domestic aspects, again with the Lake District Centre providing the greatest level of satisfaction.

In order to address the research question as to which outdoor activities were most beneficial to the participants, questions relating to this were asked on the post-course evaluation for both participants and visiting leaders. Although this information is likely to have been returned in the responses to the survey, this was not recorded by those transcribing the data to the spreadsheets used to compile the data. As a result, the opportunity to identify the most

beneficial activities from the perspective of a large number of participants and visiting leaders from across the three Centres was lost.

Similarly, to identify whether there was a difference in the perceived outcomes for participants from differing disability groups, the participants' disability category was obtained from respondents. Unfortunately this was not linked to individual responses in the spreadsheet used to compile the data. This precluded any analysis by disability from being carried out other than to identify the numbers from each category attending the Centres. This prevented the data obtained in this phase of the study from contributing to whether there were differences in outcomes by disability. With the large number of respondents the data would have had the potential to provide valuable evidence to support or reject this notion.

The three main influences on the outcomes of outdoor education courses of *the people, the programme* and *the process* have been outlined in Chapter 2. From the data available in this phase of the research, there were differences in outcomes across the three Centres with the Lake District Centre rated as high as or higher than the other two Centres. The self-reported differences in participants attending this Centre cannot be attributable to a difference in the level of challenge or achievement, as identified by participants, or a difference in challenge, as identified by the visiting leaders, as there were no significant differences in these attributes across the Centres. The setting of challenging tasks that are perceived as difficult or impossible, and success in these alter participants perceptions of what they are able to do, and as such are considered by a number of writers to be integral to the learning process (Luckner & Nadler, 1997; Mortlock, 1984; Tuson, 1994) therefore there must be other factors at work in addition to these.

As there were no significant differences in the *suitability of the activity programme, the challenge of the activities* or *the instructors' professionalism,* as identified by the visiting leaders, then these aspects of the programme are unlikely to be factors contributing to the differences. There was the potential

for the Lake District programme to maintain a level of dissonance as part of the learning process and this may have assisted with the learning outcomes. In addition, a greater level of reviewing had been observed over a number of years by the researcher at the Lake District Centre, however, there was no evidence to link either of these attributes, if they existed, to the differences in outcomes. There was an association between the differences in aims of the visiting leaders and the differences in outcomes reported by the participants but there is no evidence that there was any causality between the two.

6.6 Informing future research

Although consideration was given to the vocabulary on the participants' questionnaire in an attempt to accommodate the wide range of intellectual abilities of the respondents, the wording chosen was often not understood by those with comprehension difficulties and was frequently felt to be condescending to those without (Centre Instructors, personal communication 2008). The wording of questions for interviews or future evaluations will require careful consideration if a single measurement tool is to be used in the later phases of this research for participants with physical and intellectual disabilities. An alternative may be to develop parallel questions for different levels of intellectual ability.

The issue of the spreadsheet designed to compile the data not connecting the demographic data to the individual response needs to be addressed if analyses by disability or any other demographic factor is to be conducted using electronic analysis software of this nature. In addition, the disability data were grouped into broad categories and this restricted the potential use of this dataset for specific disability analysis if this is to be considered in future data analyses.

An observation of a group of participants with intellectual disabilities completing the evaluation forms was undertaken and the completed forms were discussed with both the visiting leader and the instructor leading the group. The observations and discussions raised questions of validity of the

responses from this data gathering technique with people with intellectual impairments. There appeared to be a lack of comprehension of the questions and a high degree of acquiescence amongst the members of this specific group of participants. This highlighted the requirement for data gathering tools to be appropriately designed to meet the needs of different individuals or their specific disabilities. It also raised the issue of acquiescence in populations with intellectual disabilities and the need to be able to address this in the design of the measurement tool in the future stages of this research. Ultimately it raises the potential limitations of using the participants with more severe intellectual impairments as respondents in this research and in research generally.

Chapter 7

Phase 3: High-level interviews with Calvert Trust and visiting organisations

7.1 Introduction

The third phase of this research involved interviews conducted with high-level representatives from the Calvert Trust and its customers or customer organisations, which were carried out between 2009 and 2010. As explained in Section 4.6.3, high-level informants are those deemed to be well informed about the issues under investigation and as exceptional reliance is placed on their responses, they are usually in specific positions or they must be purposefully selected for their expert knowledge (Campbell, 1955). For these reasons a number of selected instructors were included within the high level interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to better understand what these respondents perceived as the benefits obtained through outdoor education, to identify elements they considered contributed to the delivery of those outcomes and to investigate whether those purchasing the services of the Calvert Trust had different expectations from outdoor activities than the providers offering the service. An additional purpose of these interviews was to ensure that the interviews with participants planned in Phase 4 of this research (discussed in the next chapter) did not overlook any key aspects of the provision which was important to either of the above parties.

Research questions

The key elements of the research questions to be covered in this phase of the research were:

1. What do the providers and customers consider the benefits of participation in outdoor education to be?
2. Do these differ across different disability groups?

3. Which activities are deemed best in delivering the intended benefits and what are the attributes of those activities?

4. What are the processes involved in these activities that deliver these benefits?

7.2 Design and Procedures

This section describes: the design and procedures that were undertaken; the participants involved; the research tools used; the procedures which were followed and the analyses that were carried out within this phase of the research.

7.2.1 Design

For this phase of the research, semi-structured interviews were conducted by email. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as these allowed themes to be pursued until an appropriate depth has been obtained (Denscombe, 1998). The advantages and disadvantages of email interviews have already been discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.5.3. Those factors which influenced the decision to use email interviews included the wide geographical distribution of respondents, the low number of questions to be asked and the nature of the intended respondents as being at 'high-level', they were likely to both be competent to make written responses and to have access to a computer. In these circumstances this method was considered appropriate allowing responses to be obtained at minimal cost in terms of travel time and expense and completed within a short period of time, although the latter proved not to be the case in this instance.

7.2.2 Respondents

The selection of the respondents for this phase of the research was designed to produce an appropriately stratified sample from both the Calvert Trust and their customers (L. Cohen & Manion, 1989). Calvert Trust respondents (n=18) were chosen on the basis of their role within the organisation. Customer respondents (n=30) were also chosen by their role as the primary decision maker within their organisation or as a representative of their family

group. The customer respondents were stratified from the customer base within each of the Calvert Trust Centres. All those in the roles chosen were deemed to be ‘high-level informants’ and respondents at this level had been selected to ensure that the research was informed by those with the greatest knowledge from both the provider and the customer perspective (Coolican, 1994).

Calvert Trust respondents

Representatives from three distinct tiers of personnel were selected as respondents from the Calvert Trust. These were trustees, managers and experienced staff.

The Chairmen of Trustees of the three separate Trusts that operated the centres (see Chapter 1, Section 1.5.4) were considered as the key strategic policy makers for those centres and thus chosen for interview. They were augmented by three further trustees. These were the Chairman of the umbrella body “The Calvert Trust (Council)”, secondly a principal trustee who had been a founder trustee of all three operating Trusts, and finally a trustee who had been involved in working across all three centres at operational as well as Council level. This made a total of six respondents in this category.

The Centre Directors and Activities Managers of each of the three operating Centres were selected as respondents as they were directly responsible for the day-to-day running of the Centres and the supervision of the delivery of the activities. In an organisation of this size in the charitable sector, those in these positions are likely to provide technical guidance and advice to the Trustees and to implement the Trustees strategic policies and therefore occupied a key role. This made a total of six respondents in this category.

Two senior members of the activity delivery staff from each of the three Centres were selected as respondents. The Activities Managers were asked to nominate two instructors, who in their opinion, were deemed to have extensive full-time experience of delivering outdoor education to people with

a disability. This ensured that responses were received from experienced practitioners with direct contact with participants in order that any outcomes which may have been observed whist running sessions, but did not form part of the intended outcomes of the organisation, would be captured. This made a total of six respondents in this category.

Despite this study being sponsored by the Calvert Trust, difficulties were experienced in obtaining responses from some of the personnel selected for interview. In spite of the reminders regarding the interviews (as described in Section 7.2.3 below) to individual Calvert Trust respondents these took one Chairman of Trustees six months to complete and one Centre Director eleven months to complete. In one Centre the Activities Manager did not identify two appropriately experienced staff that could be approached to participate in the interviews despite seven emails (for which read receipts were obtained), eight months of elapsed time, three contacts with the Centre Director and representation to the Chairman of the Calvert Trust Council. Responses were eventually obtained from the instructional staff from this Centre, but they appeared to have been coerced into responding and provided only a 'hard copy' response. These responses were not easily understood and contact details were not provided which made it impossible to explore the meaning of some of their responses or understand the apparent contradictions contained within their answers. Considering the difficulties experienced in obtaining any response from the instructors in this Centre it was decided that the effort expended in any attempt to obtain further responses was likely to be disproportionate to the benefit obtained from doing so, especially as goodwill needed to be maintained for the following phase of this research. Tenacity with the Calvert Trust respondents eventually resulted in all but one interview being completed (one instructor did not respond) or at least the initial questions returned with some response by two instructors. This gave a response rate of 94% from Calvert Trust representatives.

Customer respondents

High-level representatives, who were deemed to be the primary decision-makers from visiting organisations or from families, were selected as respondents. This was to ensure the expectations from those arranging outdoor experiences for their participants or family members were represented.

The organisations or families were chosen to be a cross-section of customers from each of the three centres. Ten respondents were selected from each Centre's customer database proportional to the occupancy at each centre by the different customer sectors of schools, other organisations and families or individuals. Respondents were selected by the bookings staff from users who had visited that Centre and had made the decision to return. This generated a representative sample of 30 well-informed customer respondents who had considered the value of visiting a Calvert Trust Centre prior to re-booking. (The viewpoint of those who had only used the organisation on one occasion would be captured in the next phase of the research).

Despite this study being sponsored by the Calvert Trust, difficulties were experienced in obtaining details of the selected customers and their contact information. One centre took four months to provide the contact details of their customer sample and this was only obtained following three emails and representation to both their Centre Director and the Chairman of the Calvert Trust Council.

The 17 completed interviews by customer organisations provided a response rate of 57%. These returns were distributed across the three Centres, with five responses each from the Kielder and Exmoor Centres, six responses from the Lake District Centre and a further response by one customer who regularly attended both the Exmoor and Lake District Centres. Five responses were from family or individual bookings, three from schools and nine from organisations other than schools. Although the responses did not perfectly match the customer profile of the Calvert Trust there was

representation from across the customer sectors and through this response profile it was considered that there was no discernible respondent bias.

Fourteen customers did not respond to the interview for the following reasons. Five could not be contacted by phone and seven went ‘cold’ after establishing email contact without a reason being given (see Section 7.2.3 below). Two participants withdrew, one due to time constraints and the other as they did not have a computer; although the option of conducting the interview by telephone was offered.

Comparative interviews

Interviews with personnel from another provider of outdoor education for people with disabilities but from outside the Calvert Trust group was used to provide comparisons to the Calvert Trust responses. These interviews were conducted in order to identify whether the aims of the Calvert Trust, its organisational philosophy or culture was markedly different to those of other providers in the field. If this was the case then this would likely have a bearing on the nature of the provision offered and the selection by customers to choose one provider rather than the other. In turn, this could impact on the customers attending the Calvert Trust, the intended outcomes from their experiences and therefore their reaction to the experience and their responses to the interview questions. This process also ensured that a broader view of the outcomes of outdoor education to those offered only by the Calvert Trust was considered.

The interview questions and procedures used for this comparative study were identical to those used for the Calvert Trust. The respondents were also chosen to mirror the respondents from each of the Calvert Trust Centres in that the Chairman of Trustees, the Centre Director and Activities Manager and two experienced instructors were selected for interview. This provided a sample of five potential respondents from this organisation.

The same level of determination used to achieve responses from the Calvert Trust staff could not be applied to this centre and as a result only three out of the intended five interviews were conducted with staff from the comparative centre. These consisted of one from the trustee, one from a manager and one from an instructor.

7.2.3 Procedure

Once the sample had been selected and contact details obtained, a set procedure was followed to engage with the respondents and to elicit their responses. The prime purpose of this procedure was to ensure that the customers of the Calvert Trust did not end up on bad terms with the organisation because of 'nuisance' contacts by a researcher undertaking work on behalf of the organisation and thus bringing the Calvert Trust name into disrepute. In addition, these procedures were designed to demonstrate that an appropriate degree of effort had been exerted to elicit responses but to ensure that a disproportionate research time was not committed to obtaining responses from those with whom it was difficult to contact or were reluctant to respond.

The initial contact was made by telephone. This was done in order to increase the response rate by establishing a rapport with the respondent and because a complete set of email addresses for respondents was not available. The initial phone call was made during the working day. If there was no answer, or the call went to an answering machine, repeat calls were made at different times of day and then on different days and different times on different days (including evenings and weekends) until over a three week period a total of ten calls had been made covering all the above variables. Only if there was no answer to all ten of these calls then a message was left on an answering phone, if available, with a brief explanation, (including mention of research on behalf of the Calvert Trust) and requesting the respondent returned the call, at any time, to my home number. Two further

messages were left at one week intervals and if there was no response from these messages then the contact was deemed to be ‘cold’.

Once contact was established by telephone, I explained that the research was being conducted on behalf of the Calvert Trust and outlined the nature of the project. I asked the respondent if they were prepared to take part in the study and if so, I obtained the preferred email address for the respondent and agreed a realistic time-scale for the response to the initial email questions. After receiving an email confirming that the correct email address was being used, I sent an email instigating the interview. In an attachment to this email was a letter explaining the purpose of the research and information relating to it, a consent form and the initial questions (Appendices A.7.1, A.7.2 and A.7.3 respectively). The consent form and initial questions were also embedded in the body of the email for ease of response.

If no response had been received at the end of the agreed time-scale, an email reminder was sent which included another copy of the initial interview questions. In this email text was a reminder that participation was entirely voluntary and if the respondent now wished to withdraw from participation, then replying to this email with that decision would result in no further contact being made. A second reminder was sent two weeks later and a further reminder the following month. All emails were sent with automated notifications confirming that the email had been delivered to the address and another when it the email had been opened by the recipient (a “read receipt”). If no response (except for the read receipts) had been received after these three reminders, no further contact was made.

For Calvert Trust employees and trustees, it was assumed that there was a degree of prior knowledge regarding the purpose of the research and that this research was being conducted on behalf of the Calvert Trust, as this had been discussed with staff on a number of occasions in a variety of settings. As a consequence, it was considered that there would be a substantial commitment to this research and due to the assumed knowledge the initial

phone call was omitted. Instead an email was sent with a brief outline of the research project and inviting participation. Once acceptance had been received, the process for engaging in the research was identical to that for the customer participants, except that the reminder period was extended from two to six months, as there was not the same danger of alienating customers through persistence. Face-to-face or telephone reminders replaced emails reminders if contact was being made with the respondent for other purposes.

The intention of the interview process was to engage in a dialogue with the respondents in order to ensure that the meaning of the responses had been fully understood and that an appropriate depth and level of understanding of the issues had been achieved. Hence if there was a lack of clarity or a lack of understanding in the meaning in the answers to the questions, a further email was sent requesting an expansion on a point or asking supplementary questions. The number of exchanges for the interviews is shown in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1: Number of exchanges in e-mail interviews

Respondents (N=34)	Single exchange only	2 exchanges	3 exchanges	4 exchanges	% more than 1 exchange
Calvert Trust respondents (n=17)	7	6	3	1	59%
Customer respondents (n=17)	5	7	3	2	71%
Total respondents (N=34)	12	13	6	3	65%

7.2.4 Measurement tools

Prior to first use, the interview questions were piloted for face validity (L. Cohen & Manion, 1989) with a member of Calvert Trust management and a visiting leader involved in the management of their organisation. Following this pilot, minor amendments were made to the interview questions (Appendix A.7.3).

In order to make the process as simple as possible for respondents, both the questions and consent forms were provided on a single document in two separate formats. One was in Microsoft *Word* which could be completed on most word processors but required to be saved for completion then re-attached to an email for return. A second copy had been embedded directly into the body of the email with appropriate formatting established so that a response could be sent directly by replying to the email. These systems were again trialled for functionality and ease of use.

The interview covered eight topic areas, with two questions asked on each topic (one topic had only one question). The first question on six of the topics was a categorical question which pointed the respondent to a subsequent question, depending on the choice of response. All other questions had free text fields.

7.2.5 Analyses

Once responses had been obtained they were saved electronically. They were then analysed for content using QSR *Nvivo* software. The responses were coded into categorical data for each question using a form of content analysis. As described by Gillan (2000), the aim was to categorise substantive statements into simple headings. Each question was analysed separately and the answers were coded into common categories. Once the data had been categorised, an inter-coder reliability check was carried out with two fellow PhD students in order to increase the validity of the findings

(Bryman, 2004) by the same method as has been described previously (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1).

7.3 Results

A total of 37 interviews were completed. These consisted of 17 from customer organisations 17 from Calvert Trust personnel and 3 from the comparative centre. The responses to the interview are presented in the following section by the eight main topic headings. It must be noted that more than one reason could be given in response to a question and as a result the 'counts' of responses may exceed the number of respondents.

7.3.1 Main benefits of participation in activities

All respondents considered that there were benefits to be obtained by people with disabilities from participating in outdoor adventurous activities. The main benefits identified by the respondents are shown at Table 7.1 in descending order of total counts. Those benefits with total counts of two or under have been omitted from the table. Attention is drawn to the top three benefits and the differences in response rates between customers and providers as well as those aspects where there are a number of responses by one respondent category but none from the other.

Table 7.2: The main benefits from adventurous outdoor activities

Benefit from participation	Customer responses N=17	Provider responses N=17	Total responses N=34
Realisation of ability	10	15	25
Confidence	14	6	20
Interpersonal skills	5	10	15
Friendships / Socialising	9	4	13
Self-esteem	5	6	11
Sense of achievement	5	6	11
Team-work	6	5	11
Enjoyment	4	7	11
Health / Exercise	5	5	10
New experiences	4	3	7
New skills	2	5	7
Challenge	3	3	6
Environmental awareness	0	6	6
Independence	4	2	5
Inclusion	0	5	5
Quality of life	1	4	5
Recreational activity	2	2	4
Holiday	2	1	3
Rehabilitation	1	2	3
Risk taking	2	1	3
Support network	3	0	3
Relationships with parents/teachers/carers	1	2	3
Choices / Decision making	1	2	3
Compete on equal grounds	2	1	3

7.3.2 Establishing whether the benefits had been achieved

The respondents were asked how they would establish whether any of the benefits identified by them were being achieved. The replies fell into two main groups. The first group related to ‘observation’, either directly whilst on the programme or through changed behaviours observed by ‘significant

others' on return to the home environment. The second group suggested 'asking the participant' either directly or through questionnaires or evaluation forms. Customer responses were 14 through *observation* and six through *asking the participant.* Provider responses were nine through *observation* and 12 through *asking the participant*. Three providers suggested using psychometric testing in order to establish whether any benefit was being achieved.

7.3.3 Benefit by disability

A number of respondents (10) could not provide a clear answer to the question as to whether they considered *that different disability groups derive different benefits from the activities* with a number of these (4) stating that this was a "difficult question to answer".

One view, repeated by seven respondents (3 customers, 4 providers) was that as everyone was an individual with different needs, so the benefits could not be grouped by disability.

A further seven respondents (5 customers, 2 trustees) identified that their lack of experience across a range of disability groups was a barrier to making an informed response to this question and others recognised that although there was likely to be a benefit, they would have difficulty pinning down such differences: "I can't identify detail but it seems self-evident" (Trustee).

Nine customer respondents considered that different disability groups derived different benefits from the activities and seven did not. The Trustees were equally split in their opinions (3 did, 3 didn't). For the managers and instructors who it must be noted have closer contact working with a range of participants with disabilities, more considered that there were different benefits to be obtained by the different disability groups (7) than did not (3). Four of these offered a very brief description as to where the differences lay, as did two customers and one trustee. These are tabulated in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Different benefits obtained by different disability groups as perceived by different respondents

Respondent	Physical impairment	Intellectual impairment	Others
Trustee	General rehabilitation benefit, involving both skills and confidence.	Improved communication skills as well as social skills.	**Brain injury** will often obtain the benefit of improved communication.
Manager (examples)	A wheelchair user may gain practical skills and confidence from undertaking transfers in challenging situations gaining confidence in undertaking transfers elsewhere.	More about working with others to overcome a real life challenge as part of a team thereby developing transferable strategies that can be utilised elsewhere.	
Manager	Life impacting changes. Benefit more from new/old experiences.	Less so than those with physical impairments.	Significant recovery for those with **mental health issues.**
Manager	Explore their abilities / meet others in the same situation / find new sources of excitement, thrill, and pleasure.	A chance to experience challenge / some degree of freedom not afforded them in daily life and experience success.	**Sensory impairments** - Experience adventure (the unknown) / chance to learn / feel a sense of inclusion. **Profound & Multiple disabilities** – Sensory experience / environmental stimulation.
Instructor	A chance to do things they didn't think they could. Rehabilitation. Meet others in similar situation.		**Profound, multiple and complex needs** who may have limited physical and/or cognitive function, often the sensory aspect of being outdoors is of primary benefit.
Customer	Counteracts learnt helplessness (providing applying their new skills back to their home environment is addressed in the sessions). Realising what their potential is. Better understanding of risk. Major & minor motor processing speeds.	Development of the concept of risk.	**Acquired disabilities** - building of confidence, learning to adapt to new life skills, neurological rehabilitation (uses all the skills that would normally be done by OTs or physios in a clinical setting e.g. balance, co-ordination and sequencing). **Mental health** - well recorded benefits of exercise and fresh air. Especially relevant due to the correlation between mental health and other impairments.
Customer	The opportunity to achieve a challenge that they had not expected to be able to manage, may mean new skills, greater confidence, new friends etc.	Being able to try out new things outside of her normal routine is very important, as is mixing with others, turn taking, and 'waiting' which she finds very difficult. These social opportunities may be as important for her as the activity itself.	

7.3.4 Activities that deliver the benefits

There was considerable agreement (32) by both *customers* and *providers* that there were some adventurous outdoor activities that are especially good at delivering the benefits that the respondents had identified in the earlier question (see Section 7.3.1 above). Two respondents (1 customer, 1 trustee) did not know and two respondents (1 customer, 1 trustee) explained that it was less the activities themselves but rather how they were delivered by the instructor which delivered the benefits; as the style of delivery and the activity context could be altered to enable differing outcomes to be delivered by the same activity.

Canoeing was the activity most reported as delivering the benefits by customers (8) followed by sailing (5) then abseiling (4) and the Zip-wire. For providers canoeing, climbing and abseiling each had four responses. The results are displayed in Table 7.4 and the benefits associated with these activities, where these were identified, are also included in the table. The number of respondents identifying the activity is given below the activity and the responses are grouped by category of respondent i.e. *customer* (black) and *providers* (blue).

Table 7.4: The activities that deliver the benefits

Activity	benefit
Canoeing 7 Customers 4 Staff	teamwork x 2, overcome fears, achievement, new experience, motor skills interpersonal skills, confidence, teamwork interaction with nature, interpersonal skills, trust.
Kayaking 1 Customers 1 Staff	achievement transfer challenge (from chair to kayak). once in the kayak they are equal to their peers for SCI.
Sailing 5 Customers	teamwork new experience
Climbing 3 Customers 4 Staff	overcome fears, sense of achievement confidence teamwork Independent control of activity. overcoming fears trust of people and equip. sense of achievement Fun! changing perceptions of capability. independence; new skills social inclusion group-work. freedom from their chair
Abseiling 4 Customers 4 Staff	confidence trust in others, trust in equipment, follow instructions massive positive effect as they have control and achievable goals. based around heights and trusting the instructors. sense of achievement trust, overcoming fears and some aspects of group-work.
Walking	Group cohesion

Activity	benefit
1 Customers 1 Staff	shows what is possible without specialist equipment. interaction with nature.
Ghyll scramble 1 Customer 1 Staff	Novelty, challenge, achievement, teamwork make choices, more aware of what they are capable of, new skill, natural env., forming relationships
Challenge course 2 Customers	Confidence, teamwork, interpersonal skills, trust.
Zip-wire 4 Customers 2 Staff	Confidence, trust in others, trust in equipment follow instructions Heights, trusting the instructors, achievement
King-swing 4 Customers 2 Staff	adrenaline having fun, achievement awareness of capabilities, independence, learning new skills, social inclusion
Horse-riding 2 Customers	confidence teamwork
Paragliding 1 Customer	achievement new experience self esteem
Swimming 1 Staff	freedom from their chair
Expeditions 2 Staff	Changing others perceptions, self –discovery, self esteem, teamwork, responsibility, achievement, env. contact interpersonal skills, low-tech activity, sustained effort, memorable

Key:
Black = Customer responses
Blue = Provider responses

Many of the customer respondents (6) did not identify a specific activity, but rather identified the attributes which they associated with the benefits which were common to a number of activities. For example “Those activities that provide a level of challenge” or those “which mean that people have to work together” and a number provided examples of those activities that they considered delivered these attributes. Table 7.4 presents the responses from this approach and as only examples were given, data has been added to this table from the responses of those who identified the activity then identified the benefit. Many attributes were identified by one person alone and these have been omitted from the table. The benefits in red text are those benefits which are not normally associated with outdoor education for non-disabled people (see Appendix A.3.1) or the meaning of which may be substantially different for disabled people than non-disabled people. These are expanded on in the discussion (Section 7.4 below).

Table 7.5: The benefits and associated activities

Benefits	Activities which deliver benefits
Confidence	climbing (x2), zip-wire (x2), abseiling (x4), canoeing, kayaking, sailing, challenge course, horse-riding, paragliding
Team-work	canoeing (x3), climbing (x2), abseiling, sailing, expeditions (x2), horse riding, challenge course
Sense of Achievement	climbing (x2), canoeing, kayaking, abseiling, zip wire, paragliding, king-swing
Undertaking activities never thought possible	coastal walk, mountain walk, sailing, canoeing, camping, expeditions, zip-wire, paragliding
Putting trust in people or equipment	abseiling (x3), zip-wire (x2), canoeing, climbing,
Overcoming fears	climbing (x2), abseiling (x2), zip-wire, canoeing
New experiences	canoeing, sailing, climbing, paragliding, king-swing
Self-esteem	paragliding, kayaking, sailing (solo), land-yachting, expeditions
Independence	climbing (x2), zip-wire, abseiling, king-swing
Contact with Nature	canoeing, walking, expeditions, ghyll-scramble
Interpersonal skills	canoeing, expeditions, ghyll-scramble
Improved motor skills	canoeing, kayaking
Follow instructions	abseiling, zip-wire
Freedom from chair	climbing, swimming
Aesthetics	activities in remote locations

7.3.5 Attributes of the activities which deliver the benefits

Respondents were asked if they considered that there were specific attributes of the activities identified in the previous question that helped the participant gain the benefits identified.

Five trustees and one customer, did not have an answer to this question and all of these indicated that the instructional staff would be best placed to answer this question. Two Centre Directors and two customers did not answer this question. The Calvert Trust respondents who answered this question all had direct experience of instructing sessions for people with disabilities and thus in the following paragraph the term instructor has been used as opposed to provider.

The most frequently reported attribute was that of *challenge* within the activity (8 customers, 8 instructors) and *overcoming fear* was the specific challenge referred to by half of these respondents (3 customers, 5 instructors). *Teamwork*, or where *interdependence between participants* was required for the activity to be successful, was identified by five customers and five instructors. Those activities which provided a *sense of achievement* as the attribute were identified by four customers and two instructors whilst those involving *real-life problems to be overcome* were cited by three customers and five instructors. The attribute of *trust* was cited by two customers and four instructors. Other attributes included *skill acquisition* and *physical activity* or *motor-skill practise,* each with three *customers* and no instructors. Three *customers* also alluded to the *whole approach to the activities and disabled people* as the attribute that enabled participants to benefit from their experience.

7.3.6 Detrimental effects of participation in outdoor activities

Respondents were asked if they could identify any detrimental, or potentially detrimental, aspects of participation in outdoor adventurous activities for people with disabilities, discounting physical harm.

Nine customer respondents could not identify any detrimental effects whilst seven could do so. Providers were notably different to the customers in their responses with 15 being able to identify potential detrimental effects and only two were unable to do so. The main issues were identified in the response by a parent of a participant who wrote:

> It's not difficult to perceive that many of the potential benefits might have the opposite effect (eg destroy confidence, induce fear, invoke mistrust, etc). This is why it is vitally important to ensure that an appropriate balance is kept between helping individuals to 'stretch' themselves but not over-reach and certainly not forced.

The highest reported potential detrimental effect was emotional distress with the associated concern of psychological harm caused through anxiety of the participants regarding participation in the activities (8 providers and 2

customers) particularly if an activity was the cause of a life changing injury. Three providers and three customers identified being pressurized to participate as a strong contributory factor to the cause of this distress.

The inability to succeed in the activities was reported as potentially bringing about a reduction in confidence (7 providers and 2 customers) and / or a sense of failure (3 providers and 3 customers). A further detrimental effect identified by three providers was the potential to highlight a person's lack of physical capability to meaningfully participate in the activities, or when compared with other participants or non-disabled people.

Customers identified a sense of exclusion if people were physically unable to participate, failing to meet the expectations of participants and over-exertion caused by enthusiasm for the activities (1 response for each).

Providers also identified the potential detrimental effect of being "given a taste" of an activity and then being unable to continue with that activity in the home environment due to lack of accessible provision (2 responses). Other issues identified by providers included the lower quality of life in the home environment by comparison to the stay at an outdoor centre and, possibly related, "post-course blues" (1 response for each). One of the providers noted that:

> Taking part in outdoor activities in beautiful countryside makes it particularly hard to go back to a sometimes inactive and dreary life where the facilities to participate do not exist.

Two instructors commented that although a participant may not have had an enjoyable experience whilst doing the activities or during their stay, that these could still be seen as a positive outcome as the individual may still have achieved something and that knowing the residential experience, the outdoors or the activities are things they do not like may still be regarded as a useful learning outcome.

7.3.7 The role of the facilitator

Respondents were asked what they considered a facilitator could do to help an individual to maximise any benefit from the activities.

All the customer respondents (17) identified providing support, encouragement and motivation as helping but the providers made only 4 responses in these areas.

Both customer and provider respondents recognised the importance of understanding the needs of the individual (4 customers, 5 providers), providing feedback and opportunities for reflection (4 customers, 5 providers) and helping the participant transfer “what has been overcome and how this can be used in the long term” (customer respondent) (6 customers, 3 providers) so as to “help them to take away as much from the experience or participation as possible” (customer respondent).

7.3.8 Long-term impact

Respondents were asked if they considered that obtaining the benefits they had previously identified (and referred to in Section 7.3.1 above) would make a long-lasting difference to the lives of individuals with disabilities.

All respondents believed that these benefits would make a long-term difference with the exception of three who stated that they didn’t know (1 customer, 1 instructor and 1 trustee).

In response to the follow up question asking respondents to describe those differences, many respondents repeated the benefits (for example *increased confidence*) believing that these benefits alone would have an impact on an individual’s life. Through the interview process, supplementary questions were asked of a number of respondents to establish if they could more clearly identify the areas in which these benefits or concepts would impact on daily living but the responses often lacked clarity.

The main benefits that were perceived by respondents to make a long-term difference to participants' lives are as follows. The concepts of confidence and self-esteem were the most frequently reported (all 17 customers and 9 providers). Improving interpersonal skills (5 customers, 2 providers), the acquisition of positive memories (5 customers, 1 trustee) and obtaining topics for conversation (3 customers) were also deemed to make a long-lasting difference. When asked as to the potential impact on participants' lives of the above, the responses were invariably linked to one of those in the following paragraph.

Increased independence was the most cited long-term benefit (10 customers, 7 providers), followed by the preparedness to have a go at things that had not previously been tried (8 customers, 2 providers) as these may be achievable and lead to new opportunities. Improvements in an individual's social networks for recreation and support (5 customers, 2 providers) and improved health (3 customers, 3 providers) were also cited along with the development of a new recreational activity (3 customers and 3 providers). Finally, an increased probability of inclusion (1 customer, 4 providers) or employment (3 providers only) and an improvement in quality of life (3 providers) were also reported long-term benefits.

7.3.9 Comparison of responses with those of another centre

Comparisons were made of the responses given by the Calvert Trust respondents with those given by the respondents from the comparative centre. The low number of responses (3) from the comparative centre resulted in the profiles of responses being sensitive to any one response. This small sample size meant that any statistical test of comparison between the two groups would be unreliable (Field, 2009) A 'face' comparison of the responses did not identify any immediately noticeable differences in the response profiles and therefore differences in outlook or ethos between the two organisations. This was supported by a comparison being made between the two organisations' promotional websites. Thus it was concluded that the

aims of the Calvert Trust, its organisational philosophy and culture were not markedly different to those of other providers in the field, so there should not be any respondent bias caused by the customers or customer organisations visiting the Calvert Trust Centres.

7.4 Discussion

Although there are considerable time and cost savings made through using email interviews, a number of disadvantages also emerged. The time savings occur for both researchers and respondents in terms of conducting the interview and for the researcher in terms of not having to transcribe interviews. These savings are particularly relevant in situations where there are time constraints. A number of disadvantages were identified from the literature prior to conducting the interviews (see Section 4.6.3) and the experience itself identified further issues, some exacerbated by the interview design. The open nature of the questions and the depth of response required appeared to cause difficulties to a number of respondents. This was evidenced through the comments made by those with a commitment to respond either through their stated intentions or through their role within the Calvert Trust. This may have been a potential contributory factor to the low response rate by customers who initially had agreed to participate. Although this technique did give respondents time to consider their responses and respond at their convenience, it also gave them time to consider that the questions were difficult to respond to with a clear and concise answer. The remote and non real-time situation gave the respondents the opportunity to choose not to take any further part in the process; a decision that would be more difficult in other interview situations.

As the interview was not being conducted in real-time, in the event of the respondent failing to grasp the essence of the question, there was no opportunity to prevent the answer diverging from the intended line of questioning. As a result, long and considered responses to a somewhat different question were given on occasions with a reluctance on behalf of

myself, as the researcher, to explain more clearly the intended question in the expectation that a further long response would be made. In addition, the difficulty experienced in eliciting any responses at all from the chosen interviewees made the pursuance of an extended exchange of emails unattractive.

In hindsight, the quality of the responses may have been enhanced by using alternative interviewing techniques. In the particular circumstances of this research, I would consider pre-arranged appointments to conduct short telephone interviews as a more effective technique for this role in future. Telephone interviews would ensure that the meanings behind the questions were fully understood and the respondent encouraged to make an immediate response. If email interviews were to be used in the future, it may be more productive to use less open and shallower initial questions, building up to more open and in-depth questions as the interview progressed, if this was felt to be appropriate for the respondent.

The results shown in Table 7.1 identify a number of areas where the customers and providers agreed as to the benefits for people with disabilities from taking part in adventurous outdoor activities and also some areas where there were differences in response rates, which may imply differences in importance of the benefit between the two viewpoints.

Where these differences occur it may be helpful for the Calvert Trust staff to be able to explain to the participants or their staff how and why these outcomes they consider to be benefits are delivered by the activities and ensure that links are made between the two as part of the learning process for participants. It would also be beneficial for the instructors to be aware of the outcomes valued by customers and ensure that their delivery provides appropriate focus on these elements so as to effectively deliver these outcomes.

Realisation of ability was the most reported benefit (25 responses) and recognised as such by both customers and providers although this was more prevalent in providers (15) than customers (10). This realisation of ability may result in a change in attitude, values or outlook on life (McCleary & Chesteen, 1990; Ruzicka, 1986; Sable, 1995; Wright, 1990) and this finding supports those of others researchers (Arbour, et al., 2007; Blinde & McClung, 1997; Taub, et al., 1999) who recognised that sport and recreational activities provide good opportunities for demonstrating both capability and judgment.

An increase in confidence was reported by 20 respondents but recognised as a benefit by notably more customers (14) than providers (6). This finding reflects the increase in confidence reported by visiting leaders in Phase 1 of this research. Confidence has been linked to locus of control (Hans, 2000) and empowerment (Blinde & Taub, 1999; Hough & Paisley, 2008; Pensgaard & Sorensen, 2002; Wehmeyer, 1994) for disabled people.

The development of interpersonal skills was reported by the majority of providers (10) and this was by three trustees, four managers and four instructors. It is not known, however, whether this outcome was an intended aim of their programmes (as it is not contained in their mission statement) or has been observed as an outcome. If the latter, it is questioned whether the provider respondents would have sufficient knowledge of the participants before and after the programme in order to be able to judge whether an individual's interpersonal skills had been developed.

The social aspects of outdoor education have often been reported by customers in each phase of this study. This is obviously an area of greater importance to the customers than has been recognised by the providers. The opportunities for outdoor activities to develop social relationships through shared experiences has been recognised by researchers (Devine & Dattilo, 2000; Manns & Chadd, 1999; Tasiemski, et al., 2004) and those friendships developed through the adventure experience may create lasting bonds (Beames & Atencio, 2008). The opportunity to meet new people and expand

their social circle appears to be highly valued by those who through the nature of their disability and opportunities available to them in their home environment (or society generally) may have very restricted access to a variety of other people.

Contact with nature was cited as a benefit by six providers (2 trustees, 2 managers and 2 instructors) and these had a Centre bias with 3 responses from the Lake District (2 instructors and 1 manager), 2 from Kielder (1 manager and 1 trustee), none from Exmoor and one cross-Centre trustee. However, this benefit was not mentioned by any of the 17 customer respondents. The importance of the environment to the customers in this study reflects the low-level of importance placed upon this element by the visiting leaders in Phase 1 of this study.

This finding, albeit with a small sample, must raise a number of issues. Firstly that despite the countryside being mentioned in the headline statement of the mission of the Calvert Trust (see Chapter 1, Section 1.5.3) and as one of the stated benefits in the supplementary paragraph, this may not be forming part of the organisational culture or being embraced by all the staff. Secondly, that the environment was not a focus of any of the outdoor sessions, although the passion expressed by the manager and the instructors from the Lake District Centre would indicate otherwise. Thirdly that matters relating to the environment were not being assimilated by the participants, or fourthly that the high-level informants from the customer organisations did not regard the environment as a “main benefit” (as worded in the question - see Appendix A.7.3) when compared to the other benefits obtained through participation.

Inclusion or integration was stated as a benefit by five providers but none of the customers. Integration is mentioned as a benefit in the Calvert Trust mission statement and this may have influenced the provider’s responses, because, as with interpersonal skills, it would be difficult for the providers to observe an increase in inclusion as they would be unlikely to see the participant in their home environment. Thus this must be seen as an aim from

the programme, but one that is not recognised by these customer respondents.

The development of a support network is identified by three customers but not by any of the providers. Although not frequently reported by customer respondents, this element appears to be important to some and the Calvert Trust may wish to be more aware of the significance of this for some of their customers.

Observation as a means of establishing whether the benefits were being achieved had greater prominence than asking the participants in the customer responses whist this situation was reversed in the provider responses. The differences in responses may be attributable to the Calvert Trust staff being influenced by the practice being carried out in all three Centres at the time of these interviews, of gathering data on the benefits of participation through questionnaires (as used in Phase 2 of this study described in Chapter 6, Section 6.2.2).

There was a lack of agreement between both customers and providers as to the degree that different disability groups obtained different benefits from the activities. Some considered that each individual would take away something different whilst others deemed that some generalisations could be made by type of disability. It is possible that the differences between disability groups may have been determined by the need of that group and a programme that had been designed to address those needs.

If it is accepted that the outcomes from participation are different for different disability groups then the cause of this phenomenon requires further consideration. The importance of designing the programme and the learning process in order to meet the needs of the people participating has been discussed earlier (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3). If this recommendation has been followed, then the combination of the variations in the *people*, the *programme* and the *process* should generate notable differences in the

outcomes. If programmes are designed on a different basis, then it is important to understand the principles on which they have been designed and how these will best meet the needs of participants, as well as to fulfil the organisation's mission. Alternatively, if all participants have experienced a 'one size fits all' programme and learning process, then it can only be the antecedent factors of the people which are creating the differences in outcomes, also discussed earlier (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2). As an organisation with a mission with claimed benefits (see Chapter 1, Section 1.5.3) it would be wise to ensure that the claimed benefits were being delivered by design rather than as a serendipitous outcome from participation.

Many respondents could identify specific activities that delivered the benefits they had identified, but these covered both a wide range of benefits and activities. It is noted that a number of the benefits identified in response to this question were different to the benefits identified earlier in Section 7.3.3, and that the inclusion of sailing as an activity that delivered the benefits contrasted with Phase 1 where few considered that this activity, although enjoyable, was not seen as delivering the leaders' intended benefits of the programme. In addition a number of benefits were identified that were not those normally associated with outdoor activities and non-disabled people which indicate that there may be additional benefits from participation for disabled people and this supports the findings of McAvoy, Holman, Goldenberg, & Klenosky (2006). It is obvious that some of the benefits may only be achieved by disabled people, for example *freedom from wheelchair* when participating in various activities, but for others the difference may be more subtle. Undertaking activities that were never thought possible is a concept that non-disabled people could express. In such a case, the non-disabled person would be aware that the activity was possible for someone of their physical capability but they could not envisage themselves engaging in the activity. However, for a disabled person the activities may be beyond that which the individual perceived was possible with their physical or intellectual

capacity or their knowledge or awareness of equipment and techniques available. The meaning to a disabled person of overcoming fears or putting trust in people or equipment may be quite different if this is a concept that is outside the normal range of experiences.

It is noted that some of the attributes of the activities described in the previous question and displayed in Table 7.4 were not all repeated as responses to the question asking for the attributes of the activities which deliver the benefits. This anomaly would warrant further investigation as to the understanding of these terms or attributes.

All of the detrimental effects reported in this phase of the research may be seen as the converse of the benefits reported. Whether the outcome is positive or negative appears to be dependent, in the eyes of the respondents, on the level of challenge offered and whether the participant has transgressed through the stretch zone to the panic zone as described by Tuson (1994). Hence, getting the level of challenge correct appears to be vital in achieving the benefits and this may be a very fine judgement, especially when working with those with intellectual impairments or very limited life experiences, as they may react disproportionately or in other ways that are outside the normal range of responses displayed by non-disabled people. Although customers recognised the issue, none stated that this had occurred and some emphasised the opposite, stressing that the instructors invariably got this level of challenge of stretch ‘right’ and congratulating them on their ability to do so.

Some concerns were raised about participants being put under pressure to participate by those with influence (parents, carers) or through peer-pressure. Coercion by instructors is frequently discussed by those interested in instructor behaviour and facilitation (e.g. Carlson & Evans, 2001; Schoel, et al., 1988), however, in this case it was a parent rather than the instructor pressurising participation in the particular incident witnessed.

> It was the pressure he was put under by his parent. He was not put under pressure by anyone else and certainly not the activity facilitator.

The final concern relates to the potential to raise expectations and show people with disabilities those activities that are possible and available to non-disabled people, but due to lack of accessible facilities in the local environment are frequently denied to those with disabilities, thus reinforcing some of the inequities in society.

There was a marked difference in customer and provider responses as to the importance of support and encouragement given to the participants. This difference does not indicate that support was not present, only that the providers did not report this as a role for instructors. It is possible that staff do not recognise how important this element is for the participants or that they focus on the other more structured elements of their work, taking the encouragement they offer as an integral part of their work. This would warrant further investigation.

Without long-term contact with the participants the provider responses as to the long-term impact from participation is likely to be conjecture. This point was recognised by four provider respondents. Although customer respondents provided support for some of the provider opinions (*independence, health, recreational activity*) those of *increased probability of inclusion, employment* and *quality of life* were not supported to the same degree. Conversely, the customers placed importance on the preparedness of participants to ‘have a go’ at new or challenging things but this was recognised by few providers.

7.5 Overview

This phase of the research has used the opinions of customers of the Calvert Trust as well of those personnel involved in the design of the strategy of the Calvert Trusts and those delivering the service, in order to address the research questions. Information has been obtained as to the benefits

disabled people derive through participation in outdoor education, how these may differ between various disability groups and the impact these outcomes may have on the participants' lives. In addition, the respondents' opinions have been obtained regarding the activities, the attributes of those activities which deliver the benefits and the role of a facilitator in the process.

These opinions go a long way in answering the first three research questions. The key benefits that participants gain from taking part in outdoor education at a Calvert Trust Centre have been identified from the perspective of customers and providers. A range of outdoor activities have been identified as being beneficial to the participants and some explanation for why this is the case has been offered. However, there are difficulties in gaining a clear understanding of the activities and their attributes which contribute to the learning outcomes because of the variations in the way individual activities may be presented. Also there is a lack of clear links or causal effect between the activities, their attributes and the benefits they purport to deliver. Finally, some respondents recognised that the participants' experiences and subsequent benefits may differ in relation to their disability, but this was not universally accepted and may be influenced by the programme design or the process used in delivery as well as the antecedent factors relating to the disability.

Comparisons have been made between the responses from the customers and the providers to help understand the needs of the customers and indentify in which areas the providers may wish to increase their understanding so as to modify their provision in order to provide the best possible service. Where the Calvert Trust regard outdoor education as having the potential to deliver an outcome, yet this benefit is not being recognised by the customer, then the instructional staff need to consider changing the emphasis placed upon that outcome or related process in their delivery in order to establish a link between the outdoor experience and the outcome.

The findings from this phase of the research support the opinion that for people with disabilities the benefits from participation are generally the same as those for non-disabled people (T. Brown, et al., 1999; McAvoy & Lais, 1996; McCormick, 2000). In addition, it also supports the findings of McAvoy, Holman, Goldenberg, & Klenosky (2006) in that there are some additional benefits available through participation in outdoor education to those with disabilities which are not applicable to non-disabled people.

The absence of the voices of the participants with disabilities remains notable in this study to date and the fourth phase of this research, reported on in the next chapter, intended to address this issue.

Chapter 8

Phase 4: Interviews with participants

8.1 Introduction

The fourth phase of this research builds upon the previous phases and involved face-to-face interviews with participants who had recently attended a Calvert Trust Centre as well as with one or more 'significant other' of these participants. These interviews were carried out during 2012 and 2013, Their purpose was to better understand the meaning to participants of their outdoor education experiences, through their eyes and/or through the eyes of someone who was close to them.

Research questions

This phase of the research focused on those aspects of the research questions to which the participant viewpoint was central, namely:

1. What do participants view as the benefits of taking part in outdoor education?
2. Which activities do participants consider best at delivering these benefits?
3. Are there specific parts of the programme or the processes underlying those activities that participants consider central to delivering these benefits?
4. Do identified benefits differ across disability groups?

8.2 Design and Procedures

This section describes: the design of this phase in the research; the procedures involved; the participants involved; the research tools used; and the analyses that were carried out on the data collected from participants and their significant others.

8.2.1 Design

Interviews were planned with 24 participants with disabilities who had attended one of the Calvert Trust Centres between three and six months prior to the interview. Through these interviews, the aim was to obtain the perspective of the participants and enable their voices to be heard more directly. 'Significant others' relating to each of these participants were also interviewed to assist in validating the participants' views on the outcomes of their outdoor education experiences. It was hoped that these secondary interviews might also contribute further to the data by providing information on any changes in participant behaviour that may not have been self-reported but had been observed by their significant others.

Interviews were chosen as the method of data collection in order to capture in-depth qualitative information. They are the most logical research method for exploring individuals' feelings, attitudes and subjective experiences (Gray, 2004; Silverman, 2005). Interviews may complement other research methods (L. Cohen & Manion, 1989) and for this study were used to explore the processes underpinning the quantitative findings (Bryman, 2004; Miles & Huberman, 1994) that had been obtained from the secondary data analyses conducted in Phases 1 and 2 of the research, and has been reported on in Chapters 5 and 6. As outlined earlier in Chapter 4, (Section 4.6.3), semi-structured interviews were chosen as they allow themes to be pursued until an appropriate depth of information has been obtained to inform the research (Denscombe, 1998).

Many of the Calvert Trust's participants have intellectual impairments and difficulties arise with the reliability and validity of responses to questions from this sector of the population. In order for the respondents' answers to be considered as valid, the respondent must have understood the question and be able to provide a meaningful and relevant response. If the respondent has not understood the question then it needs to be asked in different ways until, if possible, comprehension is achieved (Brodin 2009). The interview structure

was designed so that the initial ‘settling’ questions allowed an assessment to be made of the comprehension and memory of the participant, as this would affect the complexity of language used and impact on the appropriateness of the questions for that individual.

The questions were also sequenced to be progressively complex. This enabled an ongoing assessment of comprehension while ensuring success in answering the early questions for the individual. The questions were crafted using simple language and a range of alternative wordings was prepared in order to offer the ‘best fit’ for the comprehension level of the respondent (Finlay & Lyons, 2001; Malik, et al., 1991). A combination of both simple choice and open ended questions was used to make the process easier for those with intellectual impairments (Mactavish, et al., 2000; Sigelman, et al., 1981) but also to help in revealing any acquiescence in participant response profiles (Dattilo, et al., 1996; Finlay & Lyons, 2001). The interview was designed to be of a length that could be completed in about 30 minutes. Malik, et al. (1991) recommend that a second sitting is advisable if interviews last much beyond this for people with intellectual impairments, however, this was deemed neither feasible nor practical given the time available and the wide geographical distribution of participants.

The interviews were carried out face-to-face to enable the interviewer to obtain essential information from the non-verbal cues of the interviewee (Dattilo, et al., 1996; Opdenakker, 2006). This provided the interviewer with the best chance of determining whether the question had been understood and also to better interpret the intended response (Brodin 2009). In addition, face-to-face interviews ensured that the responses were those of the participant as opposed to those of a parent or other support worker (whether intentionally or not) acting as proxy when using other interview methods. Finally it enabled the respondent to engage in face-to-face interactions with the interviewer in a familiar social environment (a location chosen by themselves or their representative) thereby also ensuring that all personal

needs could be properly accommodated with minimum disruption to the participant (Wyngaarden, 1981).

Face-to-face interviews inevitably increase the burden in terms of both researcher time and travel costs but the important advantages likely to be gained in data terms were judged to far outweigh the more practical disadvantages of taking this approach.

8.2.2 Respondents

Participant respondents

As stated above, the intention was that the interview respondents were to have visited one of the three Calvert Trust Centres during 2012 or early 2013, with the interview to be conducted between three and six months post-visit. The lower limit of the time window for the interview to take place was set to reduce the effects of short-term post-course euphoria (Marsh, et al., 1986) and to ensure that the outcomes reported were durable, at least over this three to six month time period. The upper limit was set to ensure the intervention was recent enough to minimise confounding by other events and to reduce the degree to which the experience might be forgotten, particularly by those with intellectual impairments or memory loss.

As in Phase 3 of this study (Chapter 7), there were a number of variables that needed to be considered in the selection of the participant sample in order that it be representative of participants attending all three Calvert Trust Centres (L. Cohen & Manion, 1989). This sample attempted to obtain proportionality across two independent disability factors (the nature of the impairments and whether these were congenital or acquired), as well as trying to achieve a balance across four other demographic factors which were also independent of each other (sex, age, customer sector and booking module).

A decision had to be made as to whether the sample should be divided evenly between each of the variable factors thus offering the greatest power

for comparison but at the risk of providing over- or under-representation in numbers in some categories with respect to the participant profiles in each of the Centres. Alternatively sampling could be proportional to the number of visitors attending the Centres from each of the categories of interest. However, the latter would have resulted in extremely small numbers in some categories in some Centres and thus provided limited opportunities for comparisons across Centres or categories. As the intended size of the total sample was already restricted to 24 participants (due to time and travel constraints) and as this number was already too small for statistical comparisons to be made between and across categories, it was decided that the priority was to ensure the sample contained an adequate cross-section of disabilities yet at the same time ensuring there was a balanced representation across the demographic and booking categories as well. The overall customer profile for the three Calvert Trust Centres is shown in Table 8.1, with the intended sample profile are shown in Table 8.2. The actual interview sample achieved is shown in Table 8.3. A number of issues were encountered in attempting to obtain the interviews in the intended stratified sample (Table 8.2). These issues and how they were overcome, where this was possible, are described below the tables.

Table 8.1: Profile of Calvert Trust participants

DEMOGRAPHIC	PROFILE OF CALVERT TRUST PARTICIPANTS					
Centre visited	Lakes	35%	Kielder	38%	Exmoor	36%
Customer sector	Education	N/A	Recreation	N/A	Rehab.	N/A
Booking unit	Organisation	66%	Family/Indep.	33%		
No. of visits	Single visit	N/A	Multi-visit	N/A		
Sex	Female	33%	Male	66%		
Age	Adult	37%	Child	63%		
Nature of impairment	Physical	35%	Intellectual	53%	Sensory	8%
History of impairment	Congenital	80%	Acquired	20%		

KEY: N/A = Information not available

Table 8.2: Profile of planned interview sample

DEMOGRAPHIC	PROFILE OF PLANNED INTERVIEW SAMPLE					
Centre visited	Lakes	8	Kielder	8	Exmoor	8
Customer sector	Education	8	Recreation	8	Rehab.	8
Booking unit	Organisation	16	Family/Indep.	8		
No. of visits	Single visit	12	Multi-visit	12		
Sex	Female	12	Male	12		
Age	Adult	12	Child	12		
Nature of impairment	Physical	10	Intellectual	12	Sensory	2
History of impairment	Congenital	16	Acquired	8		

Table 8.3: Profile of actual interview sample

DEMOGRAPHIC	PROFILE OF ACTUAL INTERVIEW SAMPLE					
Centre visited	Lakes	9	Kielder	6	Exmoor	8
Customer sector	Education	8	Recreation	7	Rehab.	8
Booking unit	Organisation	17	Family/Indep.	6		
No. of visits	Single visit	7	Multi-visit	16		
Sex	Female	11	Male	12		
Age	Adult	14	Child	9		
Nature of impairment	Physical	10	Intellectual	10	Sensory	3
History of impairment	Congenital	17	Acquired	6		

The three Centres were approached to identify participants who met the criteria of the planned sample. Due to the complexity of the stratification and the need to cross-reference participants' booking details to data held elsewhere (for example medical information on consent forms) I offered to assist the Centre staff with this identification process. The offer of assistance was accepted by one Centre, another provided a print-out of customer contact details of all visitors to the Centre who fell within the required time window but with no demographic or disability information, and the third Centre was only prepared to put me in touch with a representative from user organisations attending within the required time period once that representative had agreed to be contacted. The absence of demographic and disability information when selecting respondents caused problems in fulfilling the sample criteria, and the stratified sample became a quota sample. As the research progressed and quotas became filled contact was again made with the Centres in order to obtain details of organisations that had participants meeting the criteria for the unfilled quotas.

Three parents contacted considered that their offspring would not be 'suitable to interview because they had disabilities' (paraphrased attitude). They felt they would be unable to answer the questions properly and despite being informed that the research was about people with disabilities, they still were unwilling to allow their children to take part (even although two potential respondents were over the age of consent and no consultation with the participant had taken place). Four other participants who had been recruited to the study were not interviewed. The reasons for this included being absent from school due to ill health on the day of the interview, failing to have parental consent prior to the interview (this was inadvertently sent to the University of Edinburgh as opposed to being returned to the school as requested), having forgotten about the interview (despite being reminded the evening before) and having moved house between providing their address and the day of the interview (but using an unchanged mobile phone as a contact number). Due to the dispersed locations of respondents and the

clustering of interviews to overcome geographical spread, it was impractical to rearrange alternative times for these interviews and instead interviews with alternative respondents were arranged that could be fitted in with forthcoming interview 'clusters'.

Once 22 interviews had been completed it was recognised that children were underrepresented generally. In addition, there were neither children nor educational users included in the Lake District sample, although this was a major customer sector for this Centre. A further school organiser was contacted from the customer database of this Centre who agreed to assist in extending the recruitment process. She obtained consent for the interviews from three pupils and their parents who fitted the sample requirements and a date to visit the school for interviews was arranged. Unfortunately when the school's head teacher was informed, permission to interview these pupils was withdrawn as this head teacher could not see the relevance of the research to the school. An attempt was made to access those pupils for whom parental consent had been given and whose contact information had initially been obtained directly through the Calvert Trust Centre database using Calvert Trust staff. Only the parents of one pupil could be contacted during office hours, however, and in view of the withdrawal of permission to interview by the head teacher, it was felt that any Calvert-based method of recruiting these pupils had to be beyond reproach. I considered it unethical to allow myself as the researcher direct access to parents' evening contact details in order to arrange interviews. Given the long travel distance to the school area and the associated time and costs already expended in getting only one more interview, it was decided that recruitment attempts via this route had to be drawn to a close. One last interview opportunity became available around this same time (following the non-attendance of a pupil on an earlier visit to another school) and this was therefore included into the final dataset, bringing the total number of participants interviewed to 23.

The profile of the sample of those with whom interviews were conducted is shown in Table 8.3. This profile was reasonably representative of the overall

customer profile across all of the characteristics of interest (although not representative of all of the disabilities that attend the Centres) and there was therefore unlikely to be a respondent bias within the sample due to recruitment processes.

Information on the individual respondents including demographic data, disability information, and booking information relating to Centre visited, number of visits and customer sector are in shown in Table 8.4. All names used are fictitious but gender-appropriate.

Table 8.4: Participant demographics, disability, booking data and significant other information

Name used	Centre and booking module	M/F	Age	Prev visits	Occupation	Disability	Sig. other relationship	Accomp	Occupation
	Exmoor								
Amy	Rehabilitation	F	38		Professional	SCI (acquired) paraplegia	Partner	N	Motor trade
Ben	Rehabilitation	M	34		Professional	SCI(acquired) tetraplegia	Not appropriate		
Chas	Rehabilitation	M	6		Student	SCI (acquired) paraplegia	Mother	Y	Clerical worker
Dave	Education	M	17	L x1	Student	Moderate Learning Disability	Mother	N	Clerical worker
Ellie	Education	F	16	E x1	Student	Moderate Learning Disability	Class assistant	Y	SEN assistant
Fi	Education	F	15		Student	Down's syndrome	No contact data		
Gail	Education	F	17		Student	Moderate Learning Disability	Teacher	Y	Teacher
Hugh	Education	M	15	E x1	Student	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	No contact data		
	Kielder								
Isla	Education	F	16	K x4	Student	Hearing impairment	Grandmother	N	Retired
Jon	Education	M	16	K x1	Student	Complex needs	Mother	N	Support worker
Ken	Education	M	13	K x 2	Student	Haemophilia & Hearing Imp.	Support teacher	Y	SEN teacher
Lyn	Recreation	F	30?	E x1	Unemployed	Cerebral Palsy	Key worker	Y	Social worker
Mia	Recreation	F	27	K x1	Student	Cerebral Palsy	Mother	N	SEN assistant
Nina	Recreation	F	20	K x1	p/t vol. work	Acquired Brain Injury	Mother	N	Professional
							Friend	Y	Head teacher
	Lake District								
Oscar	Recreation	M	27	L x10	Unemployed	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	Mother	Y	
Peter	Recreation	M	44	K x1	p/t vol. work	Acq. Brain Injury, hemiplegia	Key worker	Y	Support worker
Quentin	Recreation	M	36	L x2	Professional	Visual impairment	Not appropriate		
Rob	Recreation	M	40?		Unemployed	Severe Learning Disability	Refused		
Sally	Rehabilitation	F	24	Ex1+Lx4	Charity worker	SCI (acquired) tetraplegia	Mother	N	Ind. living adv.
Tim	Rehabilitation	M	26	L x3	Clerical worker	Spina Bifida	Not contactable		
Ursula	Rehabilitation	F	30	L x2	p/t vol. work	Down's syndrome	Key worker	N	Support worker
Victor	Rehabilitation	M	65	L x14	p/t work (rtd.)	Moderate Learning Disability	Support worker	N	Support worker
Wendy	Rehabilitation	F	48		Housewife	Moderate Learning Disability	Brother	N	Support worker

KEY: SCI = Spinal Cord Injury. Previous visits identifies Centre (by letter) and number of previous visits at that Centre

All names used are fictitious but gender-appropriate.

Significant other respondents

As previously described in Section 4.6.3, Malik et al. (1991) recommend that when interviewing people with intellectual impairments, to identify potential acquiesance or the respondent crafting an answer intended to meet the approval of the interviewer, that the validity of responses is checked by triangulation through the comparison of responses with other sources, such as parents, support staff or written records. To achieve a level of triangulation, 'mirrored' interviews were conducted with a 'significant other' person, such as a parent, guardian, carer or teacher, who was close enough to the participant and so able to confirm the responses made and who might also have observed changes in behaviour in the months following participation in one of the Calvert Trust programmes. These mirrored interviews asked the same questions as those asked of the participant, where appropriate, but worded from the perspective of the *other's* viewpoint.

The intention to conduct interviews with significant others was outlined when making the initial contact with respondents or with their representatives. When contacting individuals who had been booked on courses by a representative (rather than by an organisation) it was usually this representative who was their significant other respondent. When contacting organisations, the possibility of the significant other interview was raised and the organiser was asked if they could identify the most appropriate significant other for each respondent. This was usually a parent or someone from within the organisation who had accompanied the participant on their outdoor education experience. When contacting the participant directly it was felt appropriate to wait until the end of the interview before asking if the participant could identify someone who might be able to act in the role of significant other as asking this question in advance of the interview might have implied a lack of competence within the individual and an attitude towards people with disabilities which could immediately lead to the respondent feeling disenfranchised.

As with the participants, a number of issues were encountered in obtaining interviews with the significant others. These issues and how they were overcome are described below.

Rob's significant other did not wish to be interviewed and Tim's significant other could not be contacted using the information provided. Ben and Quentin, as adults with physical impairments, felt that it was inappropriate to interview significant others on their behalf. Two other respondents with physical impairments (Amy and Sally) agreed to have significant others interviewed, but there were some indications that they felt that this might not be entirely appropriate given that they were competent adults. The significant others contacted for these respondents also appeared to be uncomfortable in making responses that referred to these individuals.

The group organisers were invaluable in arranging access to participants from their organisation as well as obtaining consent from parents or guardians. These same people also became barriers to obtaining interviews with the significant others of respondents from their organisations. One organiser retained the consent forms because they considered the home addresses of children to be confidential and I became reliant on them to obtain consent for the interviews with the significant others and to provide me with their contact details. Unfortunately they did not always follow through on this and despite repeated reminders, eventually the interviews with some significant others had to be abandoned for fear of jeopardising the reputations of the University or the Calvert Trust. As a result, interviews with the significant others of two participants with intellectual impairments (Fi and Hugh) were not obtained.

One significant other, Nina's mother, had suggested that I also contact Nina's friend who had accompanied Nina to the Centre, as this friend could offer responses to a number of questions which the mother felt unable to answer. This interview was conducted and the responses combined with those of the

mother, to avoid double-counting the responses relating to a single participant.

A total of 18 interviews were conducted with significant others. The profile of the significant other respondents are shown in Table 8.5. The respondents to whom the significant others' interviews related are included in Table 8.4.

Table 8.5: Profile of significant others

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC		Participants	Sig. Others		Participants	Sig. Others		Participants	Sig. Others
Centre visited	Lakes	9	6	Kielder	6	6	Exmoor	8	5
Customer sector	Education	8	6	Recreation	7	5	Rehab.	8	6
Booking unit	Organisation	17	12	Family/Indep.	6	5			
No. of visits	Single visit	7	4	Multi-visit	16	13			
Sex	Female	11	10	Male	12	7			
Age	Adult	14	10	Child	9	7			
Nature of impairment	Physical	10	8	Intellectual	10	7	Sensory	3	2
History of impairment	Congenital	17	12	Acquired	6	5			

8.2.3 Procedure

After respondents had been selected and contact details obtained, a set procedure was followed to arrange interviews. The initial contact was to be made by telephone in order to establish a rapport with the respondent or their 'gate keeper' and so increase the probability of obtaining agreement for an interview. As all the participants were recent customers of the Calvert Trust, their contact details were up to date and this initial contact was easily made.

Once telephone contact had been established, I introduced myself, explained that I was conducting research on behalf of the Calvert Trust and outlined the nature of the project. I asked if the respondent was prepared to take part in a face-to-face interview and if they were happy for this to take place in their home environment or whether they would prefer a more 'neutral' venue. I offered to send information and consent forms in advance of the interview (Appendix A.8.2 and A.8.3) or if preferred by the respondent, consent could

be obtained at the time of the interview in which case written information about the research (Appendix A.8.4) was given at the time of the interview.

To reduce the time and cost of travel, interviews needed to be clustered into geographical areas so a number of respondents needed to be contacted in an area before a schedule of interviews could be established. Thus follow up telephone calls needed to be made to arrange the interview times.

I telephoned respondents the evening before to confirm the interview time on the following day as this served as a reminder of the appointment, particularly for those with intellectual impairments and for those who had poor memory due to their disability.

As recommended (Finlay & Lyons, 2001; Mactavish, et al., 2000; Malik, et al., 1991), all interviews with people with intellectual impairments were carried out in an environment known to the respondent, invariably the home, school or organisation's base, and the respondent was accompanied by a person known to them (there was one exception). All interviews with children followed this same protocol and care was taken in establishing a rapport with the respondent prior to embarking on the interview questions.

All interviews were recorded when recording permission was granted (22 out of 23 cases) and written notes were also made during the interview. Before the interview, I engaged in three to five minutes of 'small talk' to help settle the respondent and to allow me to gauge their level of comprehension. A brief explanation was given as to the purpose of the interview and confidentiality was explained and assured. The respondents were told that there were no right or wrong answers, they did not have to answer a question if they did not want to and they could terminate the interview or stop for a break at any time. Verbal consent to continue was obtained. Each question was read aloud and if the respondent appeared to have difficulty understanding, paraphrasing was substituted using the pre-prepared variations of the question until the respondent appeared to comprehend.

Notes on paraphrasing, question variations, and prompts were included in the interview notes along with a category marked “doesn’t understand the question”.

On a number of occasions, the significant other was not available for interview at the same time as the participant (for example if participant interviews were carried out during the school day and the significant other was not a teacher in the same school). When this occurred (seven occasions), a telephone interview was conducted with the significant other at a later time. There were advantages to the significant other not being present at the participant interview. These included the participant not needing to answer the question in a way which met the approval of the significant other and the significant other not hearing the participant’s responses and being influenced in their own answers by these. As the significant others were all fully competent adults, well able to articulate for themselves, the time and travel savings of telephone interviews were considered to out-weigh the benefits of face-to-face interviews. For these telephone interviews information on the research was offered and provided in advance, if requested, with verbal consent obtained and recorded along with the whole telephone interview, as permission for recording was granted in every case.

8.2.4 Measurement tool

The interview schedules for both participants and significant others may be seen at Appendices A.8.5 and A.8.6 respectively. A number of the alternative wordings used for those with a reduced vocabulary, intellectual impairments or difficulties in comprehending the originally worded questions are included. A transcribed interview is also available at Appendix A.8.7.

Prior to first use, the interview schedule was piloted for face validity with a sample of participants (n=3) with a range of intellectual abilities: within the normal range, with mild learning disability and with severe learning disability and from different booking modules: a rehabilitation group, a recreational group and a family/individual booking. The significant others of the above

participants were scheduled to pilot the mirrored interviews for significant others (n=2) from their different situations; a group organiser, a carer and a parent on a family visit, but the carer declined to take part. All the pilot interviews took place at one of the Centres and as a consequence both significant others had attended the Centre with the participant, although this would not always be the case with the significant others being recruited for other respondents. Following this pilot work, minor amendments were made to the wording of the questionnaire, in particular to the range of alternative wordings of questions for those with intellectual impairments. Additional supplementary questions were added to ensure that the respondents commented on aspects of the provision that were of greatest interest to the research (see Appendix A.8.5 for participants questions and A.8.6 for significant others questions).

The pilot interviews highlighted the limitations of open-ended questions for those with intellectual impairments, particularly those with severe intellectual impairments. These people were nonetheless frequent participants on the programmes run by the Calvert Trust and had a 'right' for their voices to be heard. It was decided, however, that there would be discretion as to whether all interview questions would be asked of respondents whose comprehension level was judged on the day as being unlikely to allow them to make a valid or meaningful response, no matter how the question was worded.

Three prompts were given for all open-ended questions. Anecdotal comments made by the respondents (or their care-giver, if present) that related to the question being addressed were recorded, along with the impression of the respondent's comprehension of each question and any possible acquiescence patterns in their response profiles. A summary of the general impression of the interview situation was recorded along with any unusual circumstances encountered, where these existed.

8.2.5 Analyses

The recorded interviews were transcribed into an electronic version of the interview schedule in Microsoft *Word.* They were then analysed for content within QSR *Nvivo* data management software. The responses were coded into categorical data for each question using a form of content analysis. As described in previous chapters the aim was to categorise substantive statements into simple headings (Gillan, 2000). Each question was analysed separately and the answers were coded into common categories. Once the data had been categorised, an inter-coder reliability check was again carried out (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1) in order to increase the validity of the findings (Bryman, 2004).

8.3 Results

Presentation of the results

The main purpose of this phase of the research was to hear the voices of the participants. Although interviews with significant others were also undertaken, these were primarily intended to be used to corroborate the responses of those participants with intellectual impairments and/or to provide a different viewpoint from which to triangulate the evidence. In the presentation of the results the viewpoints of the participants have therefore been kept separate from those of the significant others in order to differentiate between these two viewpoints.

Through completing, transcribing and conducting trial analyses on the interview data, it became clear that there were considerable variations in the quality of the responses from the participants. Unsurprisingly, there was a major divide between the sophistication of the responses from those with physical or sensory impairments and from those with intellectual impairments.

The responses from the significant others also varied between those reporting on adults and children with intellectual impairments and those

reporting on adults with physical impairments. The significant others of adults and children with intellectual impairments attempted to represent what the experiences had meant to the participants as well as on any differences in behaviours which they themselves had observed in the participant following on from the visit to a Calvert Centre. The significant others for the adults with physical impairments attempted to replicate the answer they expected the adult participant to have given. Although the latter provided good collaborative evidence there was little added by these significant others to the responses given by the participants themselves.

In order to better understand the voices of the participants the responses of those with intellectual impairments have been separated from those with physical and sensory impairments in the presentation of the results. This differentiation may also assist in answering one of the key research questions, whether the outcomes of outdoor education differed between those with different impairments.

When making a distinction between those with physical and intellectual disabilities, a challenge is always presented by those with acquired brain injuries. A brain injury is a physical impairment which often has intellectual implications due to the location of damage. The impact on the intellectual capability is determined by the area of the brain affected as well as the severity and cause of the injury. The two respondents with brain injuries in this research were able to provide responses which had an appropriate degree of sophistication for their age and life experiences, although one had severe memory loss. In these circumstances it was considered appropriate to categorise their responses with those with physical disabilities. Nina, however, acquired her head injury at the age of two, so it may be argued that for Nina there were no memorable life experiences prior to the injury with which to make comparisons, so her life experiences are more akin to someone with a congenital disability. In addition, although both Nina and her mother described Nina’s disability as an acquired brain injury, the friend who accompanied Nina on her outdoor education experience and who was also a

teacher in her school alluded to Nina as having a learning disability as well as autistic spectrum tendencies. This description may have been used to best describe the behaviours of this individual or to put her own responses into context. Alternatively this teacher may not have been aware of the technical differences between the disabilities which may have been presenting in a similar way in Nina's case. Finally Nina may have had a learning disability in addition to the brain injury. In the absence of any further information, Nina was categorised as having an acquired brain injury as this was the disability description used by both the individual and her mother.

The responses of Chas, the young child (6 years old) with a physical impairment, also lacked sophistication due to his developmental stage. In addition he was distracted during the interview (by a television being watched by his siblings in an adjacent room) and so for this participant the significant other interview had to be heavily relied upon.

In essence then, there were difficulties differentiating absolutely between different categories of disabilities because of the continuum of ability within each impairment. In order to understand better the responses in this research the participants were therefore divided into two categories - physical or sensory impairments and (non-acquired) intellectual impairments - as there was a distinction in the sophistication of the responses between these groups. The responses of the significant others are also separated out below from those of the participant themselves.

As the demographic data associated with each participant along with Centre attended or customer sector might be required to understand the context from which a response is made, this information has been presented in Table 8.4 (above).

It must be noted that all the tables presented in the results are compilations of free-text fields and as respondents could provide more than one response to the questions, the total counts invariably exceed the total number of respondents in each category.

8.3.1 Aspirations for the visit

Both the participant and the significant others were asked what the participant hoped to get out of their visit to an outdoor centre. The responses are shown in Table 8.6.

Table 8.6: Aspirations from visit

ASPIRATION		PARTICIPANTS		SIGNIFICANT OTHERS	
	Total	Phys/Sense impairments	Intellectual impairments	Phys/Sense impairments	Intellectual impairments
	N=40	n=13	n=10	n=10	n=7
Undertake activities	25	10	7	5	3
Enjoyment	26	8	7	8	3
Social	24	10	2	7	5
Realisation of ability	8	5		2	1
Independence	12	4	1	7	1
Exercise	5	1	2	1	1
Different things	11	3		4	4
Confidence / Self-esteem	7	3		3	1
Challenge	4	3		1	
Skills acquisition	4	3		1	
Support network	5	3		2	
Outdoors / Countryside access	3	2	1		
Sense of Achievement	5	2		1	2
Find myself	2	2			
TV / disco	2		2		
Culture	1	1			
Inclusion	1	1			
Rehabilitation	2			2	
TOTALS	**148**	**61**	**22**	**44**	**21**

Undertaking the activities, enjoyment and the *social aspects* of the visit stand out as being the most common aspirations from the visit as reported by both participants and significant others. Attention is drawn to the difference in frequency of reporting of *undertaking the activities* between the participants and their significant others as well as the differences in responses between those with physical and intellectual impairments in a number of response categories.

8.3.2 Good aspects of the visit

Both the participant and the significant others were asked if there was anything particularly good about their visit. The responses are shown in Table 8.7.

Table 8.7: Particularly good aspects of visit

ASPECT		PARTICIPANTS		SIGNIFICANT OTHERS	
	Total	Phys/Sense impairment	Intellectual impairment	Phys/Sense impairment	Intellectual impairment
	N=40	n=13	n=10	n=10	n=7
Preferred activity	**7**	4	2	1	
Whole package	**7**	2	2	2	1
Instructors / staff	**10**	4		4	2
Social aspects	**5**	2	1	1	1
Sense of achievement	**3**	3			
Skills acquisition	**2**	2			
Normality / Freedom from w/chair	**2**	1		1	
Working as a team	**2**	1			1
Accommodation standard	**1**	1			
Weather	**1**		1		
Not having to cook	**1**		1		
Drive there	**1**		1		
Pub games in the evening	**1**		1		
Not sure	**3**	1	1	1	
None	**2**	1		1	
The outcomes	**6**			3	3
Independence	**6**			4	2
Accessibility of the Centre	**1**			2	1
Degree of choice	**1**				1
TOTALS	**62**	**22**	**10**	**19**	**10**

Participant responses

Six participants identified a specific activity, four the instructors and four the "whole package" as being the most positive aspect of their visit. Only three participants identified the social aspects of the programme although 12 identified this as an aspiration. Four people with intellectual impairments commented on what may be termed as ancillary aspects of the provision (e.g. the drive to get to the Centre) and one participant responded with an emphatic "*no*" to this question indicating that there was nothing good.

Two adult respondents with physical impairments made particularly notable observations:

> I liked the kayaking best, because I wasn't in my chair. I felt normal, I felt liberated. I just felt that there wasn't any difference between [name of non-disabled kayaker] and me (Amy).

> Some activities stick in my head … zip-wire and hiking, as these were beyond what I had previously experienced. They helped me take away a belief in myself that I could do things [I thought that] I couldn't do. I could be someone, do something (Quentin).

Significant other responses

The responses of the significant others were distributed across a range of aspects with notable reference to the staff (6), the whole experience (3), the outcomes observed (6) and independence (6) with half of the latter referring to the accessibility of the Centre allowing both independence of movement as well as independent choice through access to meal counters or the Centre shop. This focus on the outcomes and independence by the significant others was notably different to the focus of the participants.

8.3.3 Bad aspects of the visit

Both the participants and the significant others were also asked if there was anything particularly bad about their visit. The responses are shown in Table 8.8.

Table 8.8: Particularly bad aspects of the visit

ASPECT		PARTICIPANTS		SIGNIFICANT OTHERS	
	Total	Phys/Sense impairment	Intellectual impairment	Phys/Sense impairment	Intellectual impairment
	N=40	n=13	n=10	n=10	n=7
Nothing	**27**	9	7	6	5
Other group members	**2**	1	1		
Integrated nature of Centre	**1**			1	
Activity organisation	**2**			2	
Aspects of the activities	**3**	2		1	
Weather	**4**		2	1	1
Accommodation issue	**2**	1		1	
Managing personal care	**1**				1
TOTALS	**42**	**13**	**10**	**12**	**7**

Sixteen participants and 11 significant others responded that there was nothing particularly bad about their visit. Two participants had had issues with other members of their group, a further two mentioned the weather and one reported an issue with the accommodation. Two significant others both of whom had attended the Centre with the participant had issues with the organisation of the Centre and the activities:

> We didn't realise that the Centre had [non-disabled] groups coming in. The focus was on the non-disabled people and there were a number of operational conflicts between the disabled and non-disabled participants… [and later] …The activities were fully booked, but that is what Lyn had paid for (Lyn's carer).

> The programme wasn't structured enough. Nina needs to know what she was doing, when she was doing it, and who she was doing it with, and it wasn't like that at all… [and later] … We sat one morning for 45 minutes waiting for what the activities were (Nina's friend).

Two participants and one significant other made comment about the activities themselves:

> Clay pigeon shooting …the guns were hopeless for one handed people, not suitable for my needs (Peter).
>
> More and better harnesses for the golf buggies. I was uncomfortable (Mia).
>
> The buggy ride was disastrous. She was placed in a harness with her leg hanging out and a rope tied round her. This was quite distressing to see (Lyn's carer).

8.3.4 Learning from the activities

The participants were asked if they had learnt anything from doing the activities and the significant others were asked a mirrored question regarding the participant. The responses are shown in Table 8.9.

Table 8.9: Learning outcomes

LEARNING OUTCOME		PARTICIPANTS		SIGNIFICANT OTHERS	
	Total	**Phys/Sense impairment**	**Intellectual impairment**	**Phys/Sense impairment**	**Intellectual impairment**
	N=40	**n=13**	**n=10**	**n=10**	**n=7**
Skills relating to activity	**9**	2	6	1	
Activities outdoors / in countryside	**4**	4			
Sense of Achievement	**6**	2	2	1	1
Addressing fear	**7**		4	1	2
Tenacity	**3**		3		
Realisation of ability	**7**	3		3	2
Social aspects	**4**	1	1	1	1
Teamwork	**4**	1	1	1	1
Confidence/esteem	**2**	1	1		
Exercise / motor skills	**6**	1		1	4
New experiences	**5**		1	1	3
Trust	**2**	1			1
Things I won't do again	**1**	1			
New part of life is starting	**1**	1			
Question not understood	**4**	2	2		
TOTALS	**67**	**19**	**21**	**10**	**15**

Nina remarked “my balance has improved from that experience” and recognised the need to continue with physical exercise whilst Quentin learnt that:

> …there was another world. There were exciting things to do in the country. But it wasn’t about that. It was much more about the intangible things, confidence, trust in self and others. Knowing I could do things I didn’t think I could do.

Activities which contributed to the learning outcomes

Follow on questions asked which activities had contributed to the learning outcomes and what was it about these activities that had supported and enabled this learning. The responses are shown in Tables 8.10 and 8.11 respectively.

Table 8.10: Activities which contributed to learning outcomes

ACTIVITY		PARTICIPANTS		SIGNIFICANT OTHERS	
	Total	Phys/Sense impairment	Intellectual impairment	Phys/Sense impairment	Intellectual impairment
	N=40	n=13	n=10	n=10	n=7
All	**5**	1	1	2	1
Climbing	**18**	4	7	3	4
Canoeing	**5**	2	1	1	1
Challenge course	**4**	2	1	1	
Zip-wire	**4**			2	2
Hand biking	**2**	2			
Horse riding	**1**			1	
Sailing	**1**	1			
Archery	**1**	1			
Question not understood	**1**		1		
TOTALS	**42**	**13**	**11**	**10**	**8**

Table 8.11: The attributes that contribute to the learning outcomes

ATTRIBUTE		PARTICIPANTS		SIGNIFICANT OTHERS	
	Total	Phys/Sense impairment	Intellectual impairment	Phys/Sense impairment	Intellectual impairment
	N=40	n=13	n=10	n=10	n=7
Outside perceived ability	**10**	4	1	3	2
Challenge	**10**	2	3	1	4
Sense of achievement	**11**	2	2	4	3
Exposure to height	**4**	1	3		
Self-reliant	**5**		1	1	3
Levelling	**4**	1		3	
Physical exercise	**9**	2	2		5
Skills learnt	**2**			2	
Trust	**1**				1
Teamwork	**2**	1			1
Responsibility	**1**	1			
Forgotten	**1**	1			
Question not understood	**2**	1	1		
TOTALS	**62**	**14**	**11**	**14**	**19**

Participants

Many participants had difficulty identifying what it was about the activities that had helped with their learning. Eleven participants reported that their experiences when climbing had contributed to their learning from the activities with four of these referring to the physical exertion required, four to the element of exposure, three to the sense of achievement and one highlighting the inter-participant responsibility:

> Being asked to belay a friend. I was frankly terrified as I had the safety of others in my hand – and people did that to me. At the time it was massive (Quentin).

Significant other responses

Many of the significant others initially focused on the attributes associated with the activities rather than the activities themselves, mentioning those which provided challenge, a sense of achievement or were outside the participants concept of their own ability. Jon's mother summarises this:

> It was amazing, I cannot put it into words as a parent, it was just incredible … he achieved things that he never thought was possible ... it made him realise that actually if you try that little bit harder then it's amazing what you can achieve ... particularly the high things…. although he cried all the way round, he was so thrilled when he had done it; he was on such a high. Nothing was a barrier after that, he could do it all.

8.3.5 The role of the instructors

Respondents were asked what role the instructors played in helping the participants learn from participating in the activities and whether the participants would have liked the instructors to do anything different or differently to what had been experienced. The results are presented in Table 8.12.

Table 8.12: The role of the instructors / areas for improvement

ROLE		PARTICIPANTS		SIGNIFICANT OTHERS	
	Total	**Phys/Sense impairment**	**Intellectual impairment**	**Phys/Sense impairment**	**Intellectual impairment**
	N=40	**n=13**	**n=10**	**n=10**	**n=7**
Provided activity skills	**21**	10	8	2	1
Offered support & encouragement	**15**	6	2	4	3
Helped enjoyment	**3**	3			
Promoted life skills development	**2**	1			1
Did nothing to help learning	**3**	2		1	
Didn't attend so don't know	**6**			4	2
Question not understood	**1**		1		
TOTALS	**51**	**32**	**16**	**11**	**7**
AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT					
More customer interaction by staff	**3**	1		2	
Less hanging around	**2**	1		1	
Teach activity, not just a have a 'go'	**3**	1	1	1	
Explain why if excluding a participant	**1**	1			

Participant responses

The majority of participants could not think about anything that the instructors had done to help them learn from the activities other than with regard to the technical aspects of the sport. However, eight participants mentioned the support given by the instructors in helping them to participate. For example Tim stated:

> They made me believe in myself which gave me the courage to do the activities, for example the trapeze, their kind words made me do it.

Quentin regarded the role of the instructor as:

> …absolutely pivotal…enthusing, coaching, encouraging, cajoling. Usually people focus on what they [people with disabilities] can't do, to go to a place where the ethos is different, it is *not* about what you can't do, it's about what you are *going to do*. Any demurring on your part is dealt with. The skill of the instructor is to sense each participant and what is going to work to overcome their own perceived limitations. Many [of these] are only because of what other people perceive their limitations to be. It is very liberating, having people doing the exact opposite, expecting you to be free from those limitations. It can be very challenging, it takes you well outside your comfort zone and if you can rise to it, it can be incredibly rewarding and I certainly took that away with me and I have it for life.

When asked if the instructors should do anything different or differently, the vast majority of participants considered that the instructors' behaviour had met their expectations. However, five participants made specific suggestions for improvement. Peter and Victor wished for more instruction on "how to do things properly rather than just have a go". Mia felt the instructors needed to "hang around less and get on with the activities". Lyn did not like the way she was treated generally and Quentin did not like the approach of a contracted freelance instructor who "didn't think I was able to do an activity without explaining why, and this was very disempowering".

Significant other responses

Six of the significant others felt they were unable to respond to this question as they had not attended the Centre and the participant had not specifically mentioned the role of the instructors in their conversations. The remainder mentioned the instructors' role in delivering the activity skills or providing support and encouragement. When discussing transference of any learning back to the home environment, those asked saw this as the role of the visiting leaders or support workers.

8.3.6 The impact on life attributed to outdoor education

Fourteen participants and fifteen significant others responded that participation in outdoor education would have (or already had had) a positive impact on the participants' lives. Those impacts identified are shown in Table 8.10. Impacts which were reported only once have been omitted from the table.

Table 8.13: Impact on life from participation in outdoor education

IMPACT		PARTICIPANTS		SIGNIFICANT OTHERS	
	Total	Phys/Sense impairment	Intellectual impairment	Phys/Sense impairment	Intellectual impairment
	N=40	n=13	n=10	n=10	n=7
Increased social network	**12**	4	1	4	3
Future involvement in outdoor activities	**12**	4	5	3	
Increased confidence / self-esteem	**16**	3	1	7	5
Realisation of ability	**13**	3	2	5	3
Find self / life plan	**4**	4			
Outdoor/countryside access	**3**	2	1		
Changed outlook on life	**7**	6		1	
Increased independence	**8**	2		2	4
Greater inclusion	**2**			2	
Increased motivation for life	**2**	1	1		
Normalisation	**2**			1	1
Parents' approach changed	**4**			2	2
New experiences	**2**			2	
Not sure	**4**	2	2		
No impact	**4**		3	1	
Question not understood	**1**		1		
TOTALS	**90**	**25**	**17**	**30**	**18**

The following quotes add a flavour of the feelings attached to many of the statements by the participants:

> It proved I can do anything if I really want to (Tim).
>
> They [my family] have noticed a difference in me (Wendy).
>
> As a young or recently disabled person you are shaped by the role models you see around you and the expectations of others. To be in an environment, where you are encouraged, or even expected, to go and break the mould about what you can't do, it does wonders for you. I am now a firm believer that outdoor activities which push people outside of the ordinary are very invaluable. I am certain that I would not be so able and confident as a person. My whole world view has been broadened because I know what I am capable of. I would have lower expectations of what I could do, and therefore I would not have achieved so much in so many ways. It has helped shape who I am (Quentin).
>
> I have got a belief that I am capable of doing anything I put my mind to (Jon).
>
> It totally changed my life (Ben).

And from a significant other:

> It has changed my perceptions. I think because our children have disabilities we do try to wrap them up [in cotton wool], but we do need to let them do these things. It has changed my boundaries for him and that is quite enabling for both Dave and myself. I've taken away the cotton wool and I let him go and do more activities and that is an outcome from the outdoor experiences he has had and my knowing what he has done (Dave's mother).

In addition to the impacts on the lives of the participants identified in Table 8.13, fourteen participants identified the immediate impacts on their lives through their outdoor education experiences. These are summarised in Table 8.14.

Table 8.14: Immediate impacts on lives of participants

IMMEDIATE IMPACT	PARTICIPANTS	
	Phys/Sense impairment	Intellectual impairment
	n=13	n=10
Improved wheelchair skills	1	
Improved 'transfer' skills (e.g. w/chair to car)	1	
Taking up activities previously abandoned	1	
Recreational activity	1	
Knowing that I can manage away from the home environment	1	
Changed life expectations	1	
Improved spatial awareness	1	
Improved balance	1	
Confidence to ask questions in school	1	
Improved application to school studies	1	
More time outdoors and exercising		2
Increased topics of conversation		2
None	5	5
Question not understood		1
TOTALS	**15**	**10**

8.3.7 Negative outcomes from outdoor education

None of the significant others identified any negative aspects from participation in the programme. Also, with the exception of one person, none of the participants considered there were any negative outcomes arising from their experience of outdoor education. Sally, however, said that she had felt pressurised into doing an activity by a combination of the instructor, the group and the situation:

> I'm kind of feeling like I'd let someone down if I didn't do it. I am in tears and really physically struggling ... having to go along – it was just really horrible.

She went on to describe this as:

> A traumatic experience, not necessarily physically but emotionally, that actually stopped me from doing certain things that I would have thrown myself into otherwise.

8.3.8 The contribution of the residential aspect of the visit

Respondents were asked if there was anything about being in a residential centre that contributed to or distracted from the learning outcomes of the visit. The responses are shown in Table 8.15.

Table 8.15: Contribution of the residential aspect of the visit

AREA OF CONTRIBUTION		PARTICIPANTS		SIGNIFICANT OTHERS	
	Total	Phys/Sense impairment	Intellectual impairment	Phys/Sense impairment	Intellectual impairment
	N=40	n=13	n=10	n=10	n=7
Social environment	15	6	2	4	3
Increased independence	9	3	1	3	2
Change of environment	9	3	2	3	1
Awareness of others' needs	2	2			
Tried different food	3		3		
Learnt to use (non-mobile) phone	2		1	1	
Nothing	7	2	3	2	
Don't know	1			1	
Question not understood	4	1	3		
TOTALS	**51**	**17**	**15**	**14**	**6**

A self-contained Centre had specific advantages according to Peter:

> Being in a residential centre has the advantage of [my] never being lost. It is quite regimented and with my brain injury that's what I need. If I'm left to my own devices very little happens. I need clear plans.

Gail's teacher, who was also the trip organiser, described the qualities of a specialist Centre and the importance to her:

> (As a teacher) I want all of my children feeling equal when we go to a venue, and we are all equal when we are at Calvert Trust, and I don't really want someone telling them there is something different about them. In an inclusive environment, incidents of name calling

> could be happening 20 times a day and the staff becomes absolutely exhausted. Hence being in a specialist centre, without non-disabled people about, is more relaxing as there is a greater understanding.

Ken's support teacher, who was also a trip organiser, saw the lack of mobile phone signal a positive attribute of the Centre, but the public access to Wi-Fi and computers as negative because of the impact that both of these had on the social dynamics within the group.

8.3.9 Things participants had learnt about themselves

The responses to the question asking participants if they had learnt anything about themselves are shown in Table 8.16.

Table 8.16: Things participants learnt about themselves

LEARNING OUTCOME	PARTICIPANTS		
	Total	Phys/Sense impairment	Intellectual impairment
	N=23	n=13	n=10
Awareness of my capabilities	8	6	2
I need to ask for help	1		1
My physical [fitness] limitations	1		1
I need more patience and I mustn't always expect to get my own way	1	1	
If I did [learn something about myself] I've forgotten	1	1	
Don't know	3	1	2
Nothing	3	2	1
Question not understood	5	2	3
TOTALS	**23**	**11**	**10**

Eight participants responded that they had an increased awareness of what they were capable of doing or achieving while three responded that they were made aware of their limitations. When asked the follow up question as to whether this would make a difference to what they did in the future, all explained that they would now attempt things they had previously perceived as impossible or unachievable. The other three positive answers have been

given verbatim, as each had only one respondent. Four respondents were unable to give an example of what they had learned about themselves and three indicated that they had learned nothing. Five participants were unable to understand the question.

8.3.10 Things participants learnt about others

The responses to the question asking the participant if they had learnt anything about others are shown in Table 8.17.

Table 8.17: Things participants learnt about others

LEARNING OUTCOME	PARTICIPANTS		
	Total	**Physical impairments**	**Intellectual impairments**
	N=23	**n=13**	**n=10**
Traits and behaviours which enhance friendship	8	2	6
Awareness of the needs of others	5	5	
Positive personal traits	2	2	
Couldn't identify what was learnt	2	1	1
If I did [learn something about others] I've forgotten	1	1	
Don't know	2		2
Nothing	1	1	
Question not understood	2	1	1
TOTALS	**23**	**13**	**10**

Eight participants responded that they had become more aware of the traits and behaviors that enhance friendships. Five participants with physical or sensory impairments considered that they had a greater awareness of the needs of other people, including the implications of other's disabilities. When asked the follow up question as to whether this would make a difference to what they did in the future, the responses focuses on being more tolerant or being of more assistance to others.

8.3.11 Things participants learnt about the environment

The responses to the question asking the participant if they had learnt anything about the natural environment are shown in Table 8.18.

Table 8.18: Things participants learnt about the natural environment

LEARNING OUTCOME	PARTICIPANTS		
	Total	**Physical impairments**	**Intellectual impairments**
	N=23	**n=13**	**n=10**
People with disabilities are not excluded from the countryside	3	3	
Seen different areas of countryside or uses of this	4	2	2
Contrast to home environment	2	1	1
Aesthetic appreciation	3	1	2
Different breeds of sheep	1		1
Bigger than I thought	1		1
Quiet with trees	1		1
Not wishing to return to Kielder	1	1	
If I did [learn something about the environment] I've forgotten	1	1	
Nothing	5	4	1
Question not understood	1		1
TOTALS	**23**	**13**	**10**

The rural location of the Centres had provided participants with novel countryside experience as well as opportunities for aesthetic appreciation and to contrast the Centre location to their home environment. Those with acquired injuries and a pre-injury engagement with rural activities learnt that there were still ways that they could still access the countryside. There are other responses that may be considered superficial, however, this does demonstrate some learning about the natural environment was obtained by participants and that these were appropriate to their interests and intellectual ability.

8.3.12 Comparisons with previous visits to Centres

Sixteen of the 23 participants were on a repeat visit to a Calvert Trust Centre. When asked what returning for a further visit to the Calvert Trust had meant to them, six participants responded that they felt less anxiety as they knew what they were going back to, five alluded to a positive experience that they had been looking forward to repeating and two participants had set themselves higher goals in the activities. Sally compared going back to the Centres with re-reading a book:

> You don't necessarily learn the same things … you pick up on those things you haven't seen before.

Two respondents made comparisons between two of the Calvert Trust Centres they had visited. Lyn mentioned a preference for one Centre as the other did not meet her needs, whilst Sally commented on the differing quality of the outdoor experience, expressing a preference for the Centre in which the activities were in the natural environment away from the Centre grounds, rather than on the Centre where the activities took place on-site in a man-made environment. She described the former as:

> … so much more in the outdoors. It feels rugged or something. It is a different experience.

8.4 Discussion

In planning this phase of the research it was initially hoped that through in-depth interviews the meaning of outdoor education for participants could be compared across individual and across the three Calvert Trust Centres and that the influence of various demographic factors on participants' experiences could be explored. Given the large number of variables of interest and the unavoidably small sample size, the findings from this study can make no strong claim that its findings can be generalised beyond the sample from which they were drawn. It is not possible to estimate how reliable the findings may be as the small sample size also ruled out any statistical testing of differences in response profiles. Nevertheless the results show that there are potentially important qualitative differences in the experiences of participants

attending the three Calvert Trust Centres and they also indicate that the nature of the participant's disability plays an important role in what he or she 'gets out' of attending an outdoor education programme at a Calvert Trust Centre. In the following discussion, however, where attention is drawn to differences, these are differences only between those participants interviewed here and no "grand generalisations" (Stake, 1995) are being made. The differences may be discussed in relation to possible causes of the variations, but it is fully acknowledged that further evidence would be required in order to draw any more definitive conclusions.

A further limiting factor of this research is that it was possible that a positive response bias could have been created by the three tiered process for recruiting respondents from visiting organisations. The first 'tier' was within the Centres themselves as Centre staff may have selected customers who had had a positive experience, as this would portray that Centre better. Secondly, those customers who had had positive experiences were more likely to agree to be involved in research on the Calvert Trust. Thirdly, within the customer organisations participants were likely to be invited to be respondents because of their positive experiences or attitudes as this could also reflect well on the visiting organisation. There is evidence to support this response bias as the only negative comments were received from respondents who were selected purposefully or randomly.

The respondents identified their own aspirations for their outdoor education experience, but as this interview took place post-course these responses may have been influenced by the course experiences and therefore created retrospectively. *Undertaking the activities, enjoyment* and the *social aspects* of the visit stand out as being the most common aspirations reported by both participants and their significant others, although *taking part in the activities* appears to have had greater importance for the participants. The significant others' responses placed a greater emphasis on *independence* and *doing different things*, but these may be the significant others' aspirations for the visit as opposed to those of the participants.

Participants with physical impairments reported a number of additional aspirations. The *realisation of ability* (5 respondents), *independence* (4) and *increasing confidence or self-esteem* (3) could be described as higher level aspirations, relating to an individual's perception of themselves or their ability, and so falling into the *psychological / affective* domain (as discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.1.1). Harris (2006) also reported increased confidence, self-esteem and realisation of ability as aspirations of an Outward Bound course in pre-course interviews with a population of participants with a range of physical impairments. Such responses were absent or notably different from the responses of participants with intellectual impairments.

The focus on the activities as the particularly good aspect of the visit was not surprising when it is considered that having the opportunity to participate in and master the activities were the stated aspirations of many respondents. Particularly good aspects for some of those with physical impairments referred back to the achievement of the higher aspirations identified in the preceding question. These higher-level aspirations did not feature as a good aspect of the visit for those with intellectual impairments but this may be expected as these aspects were not aspirations for the visit. A number of those with intellectual impairments commented instead on the ancillary aspects of their visit which may have been important to these participants. Undertaking a long coach journey, attending a disco or having the freedom to watch TV may have been as novel or rewarding to some of those with intellectual impairments as undertaking a novel or challenging outdoor activity.

Sixteen participants and eleven significant others stated that there was nothing particularly bad about their visit. A further five participants and two significant others mentioned minor issues that were mainly out of the Centres' control, for example the weather or interactions with others in their group.

The comments made by two respondents about inclusion and segregation highlight the importance of the immediate environment in enabling the needs of those with disabilities to be met. Being in a specialist and exclusive environment was instrumental in the decision of one organiser to attend a Calvert Trust Centre. Another organiser, on finding themselves in an inclusive environment, was disappointed as they had assumed from their previous Calvert Trust experience (in another Centre) that they would again be attending a Centre exclusively for disabled people.

The issues regarding the organisation of the activities not being suitable for some disabilities and some of the activities not being properly adapted to meet the needs of those taking part were an understandable disappointment to those who were attending the Centres because of the organisation's claims to and reputation for expertise in this field.

Eight participants reported that their learning outcomes related only to skills in the activities themselves. Again this is unsurprising for the many participants whose aspirations solely lay in enjoying and participating in the activities.

It is noted that although those with intellectual impairments did not identify psychological and affective benefits as aspirations, some recognised these as outcomes. Most notable of these were *addressing fear* (4 participants) and the value of *tenacity* (3 participants), neither of which were mentioned as aspirations by those with physical impairments.

Those with physical impairments identified a realisation of their own ability (3 participants and 3 significant others) as a learning outcome. Both the three participants and the three significant others had aspirations of this outcome, as did two further significant others.

Four participants with physical impairments learnt about activities that they could undertake in the countryside in the future, and this might have been associated with their affiliation to green space and its connections to well-

being (Aked, et al., 2008). For the three participants with recently acquired injuries who gave this response this could have been an especially important factor as each already had a great affiliation to the countryside and had sustained their injuries participating in adventurous outdoor activities. Returning to natural environments would have been likely to have important psychological implications as well as being part of their rehabilitation. Because of the role nature may play in aiding healing post injury or illness (Beringer, 2003; Schell, et al., 2012; Ulrich, 1984), their future engagement with nature could well assist with their ongoing recovery.

Learning about activities which can be undertaken in the countryside were not reported by any of the participants with intellectual impairments as an important or intended outcome, but as none of these participants were restricted in their physical ability to access the countryside, they were perhaps unlikely to regard this as a key outcome.

Other psychological aspects that have to be addressed when coming to terms with an acquired disability were highlighted by the responses from the participants with acquired spinal cord injuries, and their outdoor education experiences both emphasized the attendant issues as well as helping to address them. Amy learnt that:

> … there were some [outdoor] activities that I shall never do again … that part of my life has finished ..

but later on, and on a more positive note, realised:

> … that now there are different [outdoor] activities that I can replace them with, so a new part of my life is starting.

Sally learnt that there was still:

> … the opportunity to be able to be in the countryside without being any stronger ...

(i.e. without needing increased aerobic capacity, as any further increase in her aerobic capacity was not possible due to the nature of her injury).

Ben learnt that:

> … life still goes on - which is the big one ...

and went on to explain:

> … when you have been cooped up inside [for over 2 years since injury] going a bit stir crazy and then you are put back into the wild and do that sort of stuff, well it blew me away.

Chas (a child with spinal cord injury) was reported by his parents to have gained experiences his non-disabled peers did not have:

> There are not many children in his [mainstream] class who have even been in a boat. He has finally got the upper hand over them … [usually] it is the other way round.

Climbing was the activity most frequently reported as helping to deliver a number of the identified hoped for or intended outcomes. This mirrors the findings from both Phase 1 and Phase 3 of this study. All seven participants who mentioned either *addressing fear* or *tenacity* identified the activities of climbing, the challenge courses or other activities which involved heights as a major contributory factor in their learning. For them it was the exposure, physical or psychological challenge, perseverance and sense of achievement presented by these activities that helped underpin their learning. The attributes of the activities reported by the other respondents as contributing to the learning outcomes were *being outside the concept of ability*, *challenge* and a *sense of achievement* (see Table 8.11) and all of these can also be associated with climbing. These findings are consistent with theoretical perspectives on learning in outdoor education (Luckner & Nadler, 1997; Mortlock, 1984; Tuson, 1994) as discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.3). From this study, climbing and related activities such as challenge courses, particularly those at height, may be seen as ideal vehicles for delivering some of the key outcomes sought by participants, organisers and providers.

Rubens (1997) has been critical of activities such as zip-wires, ropes, courses, abseiling and others which he described as “high thrill, low effort,

short timescale activities with little responsibility devolved to participants" (p.74). He refers to these as 'narrow adventure' with limited educational benefit that does not lead to students taking responsibility for their own actions. This criticism has gained the support of other writers (Beames, et al., 2012; P. J. Higgins & Nicol, 2002; R. Williams, 2012). For the disabled population, however, it would appear that these activities do have considerable worth, both in the eyes of participants and organisers, through providing experiences which those with disabilities thought were outside of their sphere of ability. These activities challenged individual participants at an appropriate level. Being of short duration, they allowed participants to go on to experience other activities which they may also have perceived as impossible, thus reinforcing learning about what may be possible and helping to create a new reality for participants. These findings are not actually at odds with Rubens and others for, as Rubens recognises, adventure is subjective and that programmes lack value only if the programme is made up entirely of activities which offer 'narrow adventure' (Rubens, 1997, p. 74). The Calvert Trust therefore needs to ensure that their programmes build on the learning gained through these 'narrow adventures' by also providing experiences which include adventure experiences with longer timescales, requiring sustained effort, presenting a variety of challenges and devolving greater responsibility to participants.

Both the participants and their significant others reported that the instructors facilitated access to the activities and provided support and encouragement to participants. However, they did not see them as playing any role in helping the participants learn from the activities or in transferring any learning to their everyday environment.

The participants with physical impairments in Harris' (2006) study frequently referred to the 'debriefing sessions' as being an important catalyst for change when they returned home. References to any such debriefing or reviewing sessions are entirely absent from the interviews with both participants and significant others. This is not to say that reviewing did not take place, as this

had been observed to take place on occasions, but for this reviewing not to be commented on by any of the 40 respondents in this study must bring into question the consistency or effectiveness of any reviewing undertaken. Learning theory and writers on outdoor education suggest that reflection is essential for the experience to gain permanency and relevance (Beard & Wilson, 2006; Gassner & Russell, 2008; Taniguchi, et al., 2005). Through providing the opportunities for reflection and the tools to assist in this process, instructors can help participants to learn from their experiences and to transfer this learning to everyday life, thus contributing to the longer-term impact of outdoor education (Gassner & Russell, 2008; P. J. Higgins & Nicol, 2002; Luckner & Nadler, 1997).

From the experiences reported by these participants, it would appear that any learning was achieved through the individual reflecting on their experiences themselves in what James (1980) referred to as “the mountains speaking for themselves”, rather than from any input from instructional staff as to how any learning within the programme might map onto everyday life. Any further insights into this have been obtained with the help of significant others such as teachers, parents or care workers, who may have observed changes in behaviours or attitudes or were aware of the potential learning outcomes from outdoor education.

Writers suggest that significant others are in a good position to connect the outdoor experience to the home environment and that they could assist with any review of the activities and encourage applying or reinforcing the positive behaviour in the different environment (Luckner, 1994; Ofsted, 2004b; Sibthorp, et al., 2008). In the interviews with significant others from educational establishments all three respondents confirmed that any transfer to the school or home environment had been left to them to make.

It is recognised that the successful transfer of learning to other contexts has the potential to make a substantial impact on the lives of a participant by changing the way they operate or perceive themselves. If the learning from

the programme does not transfer back to the home environment then any behaviours learnt during the outdoor experience become a 'one-off' with the assimilation into everyday behaviour and resultant longer-term benefits being lost. If the Calvert Trust is to maximise the benefits from the outdoor experiences that it claims participants gain from their experiences they may need to focus in on how they can ensure that this learning is transferable and sustainable, as this does not appear to be an integral feature of current programmes and opportunities for the learning transferring to everyday life may be being left to chance or the work of others.

The responses made by both participants and their significant others indicate that the outdoor education experiences had made a notable impact on the lives of participants. These ranged from the willingness to take part in outdoor activities again in the future, the most frequently reported outcome by those with intellectual impairments, to completely changing the quality of life or life expectations for a large number of those with physical impairments.

Encouraging future involvement in outdoor activities, particularly if this is on a regular basis, as was hoped to be the case by six participants, clearly has potential physiological and health benefits (Mobily, 2009; Sadowsky & McDonald, 2009). These activities are likely to be in the natural environment and thus provide an increased connection with green spaces which may satisfy a personal desire to be in the countryside and/or promote an increase in well-being (Aked, et al., 2008; Newton, 2007).

The experience of outdoor education also seemed to have impacted on the lives of a number of participants at a social and interpersonal level. The contact with others in a similar situation, either with a disability, with the same disability or with similar interests had provided opportunities to widen social circles and support networks. This was of high importance to a number of the participants and was referred to as a benefit by many others. For some the confidence to engage in non-disabled social environments and the opportunity to look, behave or be treated normally opened up opportunities

for integration with non-disabled people, further expanding social networks. Both strengthening and broadening social networks are considered as important for well-being (Aked, et al., 2008, p. 6) and having the opportunity to talk about participation in the various activities experienced at the Calvert Centres provided topics of conversation with a degree of normality, while also providing opportunities to demonstrate both capability and judgement (Arbour, et al., 2007; Thompson, 2002).

A change in attitude towards their offspring's capability and those things they would be permitted to do in future was reported by four parents. This was likely to have an indirect but substantial impact on these participants' lives as a result of those parents realising that the boundaries for those with disabilities may not be as narrow as they had previously perceived and that a greater degree of risk and freedom is acceptable. This could in turn lead to more opportunities for the individual to grow and be more independent.

The area of greatest immediate change was reported in the psychological or affective domains. The interviews with participants have provided some evidence to support the often-reported (but seldom-evidenced) claim that participation in an outdoor education programme for people with physical impairments can be life-changing. This wider aspect of the experience was summed up by Ben when he stated "it totally changed my life". One of the participants with physical impairments was aged only six and another had profound disabilities and so were unlikely to report such changes but 6 out of the 13 participants specifically commented on the major impact that they expected their outdoor experience to have on the rest of their lives.

Other participants' comments following their course were:

> It has given me my life back again. I became aware of how able I was, so instead of feeling really disabled I felt that I had abilities. The limitations I put on myself post-injury were in my mind really and that it is possible to do things. So, although part of my life has finished, a new part of my life is starting (Amy).

> It did help me re-evaluate my life, so [otherwise] my life might have been different. It has helped me push boundaries; I *am* going to do that lifetime goal I've been thinking about. I'm going to drive to Zambia next year and live there for a while (Sally).

> I have got a belief that I am capable of doing *anything* I put my mind to …so I can transfer that into getting good grades at school. I'm now trying to plan ahead to my future before it starts coming to us quickly (Jon).

> It proved I can do anything if I really want to (Tim).

> My whole world view has been broadened because I know what I am capable of. I would have lower expectations of what I could do, and therefore I would not have achieved so much in so many ways. It has helped shape who I am (Quentin).

> I gained confidence from the visit. I am more confident talking to people in social situations. It has also given me confidence to talk to other pupils at school [who are not deaf] (Isla).

Isla's view was supported by her mother when talking about the impact on Isla's life:

> The increase in her confidence ... when she moves on from school, she will not be as alone as she did (sic.) and she will be more willing to mix with others.

The only reported negative outcome from participation related to the pressure placed upon one person (Sally) to participate when this was against her will. Challenge by choice is an underlying principle of outdoor education and the difficulties with this concept have been discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.4). On this occasion, the choice of the participant to decide whether or not to participate appears to have been ignored and this would seem to have had a serious detrimental effect on the rehabilitation of this individual.

With respect to the concept of choice, Isla's guardian openly admitted to 'forcing' Isla to attend the residential programme:

> She has always been very shy and she wouldn't know anybody so she just didn't want to go… We made her go saying "it will be good for you – off you go".

On this occasion it was a very positive experience.

> She loved it and she made friends that she is still in touch with. It was really good for her as it brought her out [of herself].

Isla subsequently took part on the programme on a number of further occasions and became a 'junior leader' helping others to obtain the benefits that she had experienced.

The residential setting was reported to contribute to the benefits obtained by participants through providing opportunities to engage with other participants over an extended period of time. Providing greater opportunities for social interaction has already been reported as being important for many of the participants. The close social environment that forms in the residential setting may also provide encouragement to help participants to persevere and so succeed in the activities, as well as providing recognition for their successes (Barrett & Greenaway, 1996; R. Williams, 2012).

The residential setting also contributed to the independence of participants. The commitment to be separated from parents, family and other support networks was an important step for many participants. This was also a challenge to those with acquired disabilities who were only just beginning to come to terms with their changed world and having to make adjustments for their needs in their own home environments, let alone somewhere they had never been before.

Being in the residential setting may provide more opportunities to be independent and practise life-skills as continuous direct supervision by support staff or parents is not possible. This enables participants to demonstrate what they can achieve in terms of independence, an opportunity which may not manifest itself in the home environment (Zoerink, 1988b). These life-skills may include engaging in 'activities for daily living' to a timescale demanded by the residential environment, for example getting up and dressed in time for breakfast or the responsibility of an individual to be

on time and properly equipped for activities or to take responsibility for their own safety, decision making or behaviour (Costa, et al., 2004).

Eight participants stated that they had become more aware of their own capabilities during the programme and this was an aspiration for a number of other participants. As a result, they would in future attempt things they had previously perceived as impossible. This outcome was also identified as an aspiration of the programme by a number of organisers both in this phase of the research and in Phase 3 (sees Chapter 7, Section 7.3.1).

Eight participants responded that they had gained a greater awareness of the needs of others and in particular a greater understanding of other individuals' disabilities. When asked how this would make a difference to them in the future, each explained that they would either be more tolerant of others or try to help others more.

Two respondents indicated that they had observed positive traits in other participants on the programme and realised the effect these positive attitudes towards their own disability had on their outlook on life as well as the positive impact this had on others they came in contact with. These traits had been inspirational to two recently disabled participants whose future intentions were to emulate such an attitude.

The elements that participants had learnt about the environment could perhaps be regarded as superficial, although these were potentially important to the individual. The lack of reported environmental understanding or increased environmental responsibility may be attributed to the way the environment was presented by the instructors. Ken's teacher confirmed that when canoeing the instructors were:

> ... talking non-stop about environmental things and they tended to be really interesting ...

but when asked why she thought that this had not been reflected in the pupils' responses to this question stated that at the Centre she visited:

> … the only activity which is in an environmental situation is the canoeing ...

so she did not expect much to be learnt about the environment by participants.

The only respondents who considered that what they had learnt about the environment would change the things they would do in the future were the three participants with recently acquired injuries who realised that there was a greater degree of accessibility to the countryside for wheelchair users than they had previously thought was possible. All three stated their intentions to go to places with more challenging terrain from which they had felt excluded since becoming a wheelchair user.

8.5 Summary

This phase of the research used interviews to provide the participants with the opportunity for their voices to be heard, so enabling them to give meaning to their experiences of outdoor education. In order to provide evidence to support the validity of the responses from those with intellectual impairments, mirrored interviews were also conducted with significant others associated with the participants, where this was appropriate and achievable. The combination of these two perspectives helped address the research questions by providing the participants' views of the benefits gained through their outdoor education experiences, information on those activities participants and their significant others considered delivered the intended benefits, feedback on those parts of the programme or delivery processes that were perceived as contributing to achieving these, and insights into whether the perceived benefits differed in those with physical/sensory versus intellectual impairments.

The interview responses go a long way in answering these questions. The main aspirations that participants had from taking part in outdoor education at a Calvert Trust Centre were to undertake the activities, broaden social interaction and enjoy themselves. The main learning outcomes identified

were the acquisition of the skills relating to the activities and a sense of achievement. Thereafter there appeared to be a difference to the learning outcomes between those with physical/sensory and intellectual impairments. Those with physical impairments learnt about activities that could be conducted in the countryside by those with limited mobility and broadened their realisation of their capabilities. Those with intellectual impairments identified addressing fears and increasing tenacity as primary learning outcomes.

Climbing and other activities with the attributes of challenge (either psychological or physical), a sense of achievement and exposure to heights were identified as being especially instrumental in delivering a number of the perceived benefits of participation in outdoor education.

Exploration of the role of the instructors identified their main function as being seen as relating to enabling participation in the activity and encouraging success. Assistance with learning from the activities and transfer of any learning to the home environment appeared to have been left to either the participants themselves or to their support staff and significant others.

The role of the residential setting was also examined. It was reported that this contributed to the quality of the social environment, increased independence and represented an important change of physical environment for participants. Finally some understandable differences in aspirations and outcomes were observed between those with physical and intellectual disabilities, although allowance must be made for the ability of those with intellectual impairment to express themselves adequately in the interviews. Caution must in addition be given to any generalisation due to the small sample size in both of these groups.

Chapter 9

Discussion

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter the overall research findings are considered in relation to the research questions. The potential implications of these findings for those with disabilities are discussed as are the issues these raise for the Calvert Trust as a provider of residential outdoor education for people with disabilities.

9.2 Limitations of the research methods

In the post-course evaluation analyses carried out in Phase 1 of this study, all the respondents were from the Lake District Centre alone, as this was the Centre which used this evaluation system. Due to the difference in character of the three Calvert Trust Centres the findings could not be generalised across the Centres.

In Phase 2 the post-course evaluation survey was carried out across the three Centres but only some of the data was recorded and even that was only consistently gathered and recorded across the three Centres for a short period of time. Comparisons across the Centres have been made where the data have made this possible.

In Phase 3 interviews were conducted with representatives of both customers and providers across all three Centres, with comparisons being made between these two populations of their expectations of the outcomes.

Finally in Phase 4 interviews were conducted with a representative sample of participants and their ‘significant others’. Although this sample was representative across the customer base for the whole of the Calvert Trust, due to data protection issues and difficulties in obtaining access to participants through ‘gate-keepers’, these samples were not representative of

the participants attending each Centre. For example there were no children or school groups interviewed for the Lake District Centre although these were major user groups; and no-one with an intellectual impairment was interviewed at the Kielder Centre despite this being a large proportion of their customers. The reasons for this have been discussed in the previous chapters.

A concern for using the customers of an organisation as the respondents in research into that organisation is the possibility of a positive response bias (SurveySystems, 2012). This response bias might have occurred in questionnaire surveys such as those used in Phases 1 and 2, but it was even more likely in the interviews, particularly those conducted face-to-face, as the tensions caused by disagreement are greater in these situations.

The sample design and response selection process had the potential to further increase the probability for a response bias. The decision to interview only returning customers as purchaser respondents in Phase 3 and a number of returning participants in Phase 4 introduced a response bias as the outdoor experience would have been deemed positive enough to make the customer wish to return. Furthermore, the data protection issues provided a quasi-legal necessity for the recruitment process to pass through a number of 'gate-keepers'. The attitude of the gate-keepers towards research generally and to the specific research may have affected the access granted to potential respondents by these gate-keepers. One of the likely consequences of the access to respondents being vetted by gate-keepers would be the filtering out of respondents with a negative attitude to the parent organisation or the outdoor experiences in favour of those with a positive attitude as this would reflect better on the Centres and the visiting organisations. This research encountered gate-keepers at a number of levels. The majority of the respondent organisations were selected by Calvert Trust Centre staff and individual respondents from organisations were selected by gate-keepers within those organisations. A third set of gatekeepers were encountered with parents, guardians or carers. Similar gate-keeping issues were experienced

by Nicholson, Colyer, & Cooper (2013) in their research into adults with intellectual disabilities in Scotland.

A further concern arose with interviewees who were responding in the presence of their significant others, and in particular, school students. The authoritative relationship between the participant and the significant other had the potential to introduce a degree of coercion (intended or otherwise) to participate in the interviews. There was also the probability that the responses of the participants would have been influenced by a desire to please the authoritative figure if they were present. Hugh, an interviewee in Phase 4 with intellectual impairments, was assisted with the recollection of events by his teacher who had accompanied this student on the visit. The teacher used positive techniques to encourage responses suitable for the individual (Antaki, 2013) but which also may be described as 'leading' the respondent to specific answers.

To address the potential response bias, future research should consider random selection of respondents or purposeful selection although these techniques proved not to be possible in this study. An interesting, but logistically problematic development would be to include customers who chose not to return to the Calvert Trust, who chose not to repeat the outdoor education experience and also potential customers who had considered taking part in outdoor programmes either at the Calvert Trust or elsewhere, but had decided against this experience. The information obtained from these latter sources is likely to be valuable in understanding alternative and less positive perceptions of the outdoor education experience and could be invaluable in guiding the Calvert Trust in developing and marketing its products.

9.3 Findings in relation to the research questions

The original research questions were:

1. What are the key benefits (if any) that participants gain from taking part in an outdoor education course at a Calvert Trust Centre?
2. Which outdoor activities are most beneficial to the participants, and why?
3. Relative to their disabilities, do the participants' experiences differ with respect to the benefits of the programme, and which are the most valued activities?
4. How do the delivery and/or the context of the outdoor education courses, and the associated activities, influence participants' perceptions of these?

9.3.1 The benefits of participating in outdoor education

In Phase 1, the visiting leaders reported the benefits from participating in a programme of outdoor education as *confidence* (43% of the 502 respondents), *independence* (27%) and an opportunity to *experience new activities* (20%), either as part of education, individual life-experiences or to provide recreational options for the future.

In the quantitative study with participants in Phase 2, when asked about various aspects of their experience, there was a high level of agreement amongst the participants (n=2,507) that they had been *challenged* by the activities (90% of respondents), had obtained a *sense of achievement* through participation (86%) and felt they had increased their *self-esteem* (84%).

In the qualitative study in Phase 3, high level decision makers from customers (n=17) identified an increase in *confidence* (14 respondents), a *realisation of ability* (10) and the opportunity to increase *social networks* (9) as the main benefits. The Calvert Trust high level respondents (n=17), as the providers of the experiences, saw a *realisation of ability* (15 respondents) and improved *interpersonal skills* (10) as the benefits they hoped participants to gain.

In the qualitative study in Phase 4, participants (n=23) reported the things they gained from the experiences were the *skills* involved with undertaking the activities (6 respondents), a *sense of achievement* (4), *addressing fear* (4), knowledge of *activities they could still undertake in the countryside* (4), a *realisation of ability* (3) and *tenacity* (3). The significant others (n=17) identified a *realisation of ability* (5), the opportunity for *physical exercise* (5) and having had *new experiences* (4) as the benefits they saw the participants obtain.

In drawing together the four phases of the research it may at first appear that the benefits identified in each phase are isolated to a degree from those identified in other phases of the study. Considering that generally all phases were reporting on either the same or similar experiences but from a different perspective, large variations in the findings would bring into question the validity of the measurement tools used to obtain the data, the validity of the answers given by respondents or that the respondents from the different viewpoints were looking for different outcomes from outdoor education or focusing on different aspects of the experience.

Alternatively, the various reported benefits *may* be connected and these benefits *may* be some of the component parts that contribute to an overarching group of benefits obtained from the experiences. If this is the case, the variations will have been caused by the perspective of the respondent or the wording used in the measurement tools so that only a part of the whole picture has been seen or reported on.

In order to make links between the responses from the different phases the reported benefits have been categorised into four broad areas. These are a *range of experiences*, *physiological/health, social/interpersonal* and *affective benefits*.

Gaining *experiences* have frequently been reported by the participants either through the evaluation questionnaire used in Phase 2 (achieving things not

thought possible) or through free response questions in Phase 4 and by the customer organisations' leaders in Phases 1 and 3. The activity experiences have included new experiences, learning about the activities themselves, or ways in which the countryside can be accessed. The activities may have included a degree of challenge that may also be seen as an experience itself along with experiencing a sense of achievement in overcoming that challenge or success in an activity.

A similar perspective is evident in a survey of 2,168 UK teachers by Pyle (2010); 97% of responses indicated that providing new experiences was a motivation for organising learning outside the classroom, although this survey did not make reference to whether any of the teachers were involved in the education of pupils with disabilities.

Murray (2002, p. 1) points out the importance to people with disabilities of the new opportunities to "engage in activities that make us happy, so developing emotional and psychological well-being". McCormick, White, & McGuire (1992, p. 34) also found that "direct positive experiences" were given high value by the parents of participants in an American summer camp for people with disabilities, although these were seen to be of shorter term benefit than the "social growth" gained from the experience. Devine & Dawson (2010) found that positive new experiences made participants with disabilities more likely to try other new things.

The physical nature of the activities undertaken would have offered a degree of physical exercise but the exercise obtained on a short programme of outdoor education is in itself unlikely to have a long-term health benefit for the participant. In order for a longer-term health benefit to be obtained the outdoor education experience must become a catalyst for continued physical exercise in everyday life. This is possible as the enjoyment gained through participation could encourage a continuation of the specific or other similar activities resulting in the associated health benefits. The potential for developing long-term recreational activities was identified as a role of outdoor

education by early writers (e.g. T. Parker & Meldrum, 1973) and was identified by Telford (2010) as a long-term outcome in his study; although in Telford's study non-disabled participants concentrated on only a single outdoor activity during their 5-day programme, rather than the multi-activity programmes offered by the Calvert Trust and many other providers.

For people with disabilities the opportunities for continuing in many of the outdoor activities are limited due to a lack of suitable provision within acceptable travelling distances of the participant's home, and even where these do exist there are still barriers to be overcome. Barriers to participation include transport to the location, the cost of travel and participation, lack of suitably adapted equipment, lack of expertise or physical assistance and inappropriate attitudes towards disabled people and towards their participation in risk activities (Jones, 2009; Shields, et al., 2012). With these barriers in place, if continued engagement in the activities is an intended outcome, or a claim from participation, then a proactive policy or programme of providing information and support is likely to be required. This information and support would not only be to the participants but also to the gate-keepers and providers in the home location who lack the necessary expertise or confidence to include people with disabilities in outdoor activities. Without this support the experience is likely to be restricted to a single event or repeat experiences in a specialist Centre that do not deliver long-term lifestyle changes with the benefits associated to this.

The findings from this study have shown that the activities and the residential experiences have provided positive outcomes in the social domain. The shared experience of undertaking the activities has provided openings for interactions with others, especially when the activity involved teamwork or the interdependence of participants. The shared time in the residential setting has also provided opportunities for social interactions and these positive social experiences have led to the establishment of friendships for many participants. During these exchanges an individual has had the chance to

practice or improve skills that help establish or maintain social relationships and these were valued by the significant others in this study.

This social growth was also a major finding by Devine & Dawson (2010) into American camps for people with disabilities. Also in an American camp setting McCormick, et al. (1992) found that social growth was the most important benefit as perceived by parents of participants with disabilities. Considering the value attached to these social outcomes by customers and participants Calvert Trust should consider giving greater emphasis to those activities that promote social behaviour and the development of friendships. Being placed in social situations may be challenging for some participants and the sense of achievement obtained through success in these social situations may provide further positive new experiences for the individual.

In this study a number of participants with disabilities stated that they felt isolated in inclusive situations and sought the company of others with disabilities where their needs and issues were better understood. Many parents and some organisations in Phases 3 and 4 also recognised the benefits of interacting with a disability peer group where an individual could see that they were not alone in their situation, could compare themselves with others with similar disabilities and "not feel as if they are always a long way to the bottom of the group" (Parent of disabled child). Amy an adult participant with a spinal cord injury from Phase 4 explains some of the issues:

> I went there specifically to meet other spinal cord injured people, because they knew something of what I have been through and what it was like to have an SCI. This meant I didn't have to have those conversations [about my accident and extent of my injuries] with them. I could have conversations about normal things.
>
> Also the embarrassing things about SCI… if something goes wrong [bowel control] when you are with someone [else] with SCI, it is not going to be a massive deal, but if you are in a [non-disabled] social situation; it's just mortifying.

> It was good to have conversations about some of the difficulties of living with SCI… I was the newest injury on the course so everyone had more experience than me of being in a chair… I found them very inspirational as they were doing things that I would like to do… Being amongst other SCI people I became aware of how able I was … so instead of feeling really disabled, I felt that I had abilities.

Blinde & McClung (1997) found that adults with physical disabilities were aware of the social importance of their involvement in activities and how these activities provided social experiences that everyone else took for granted. Murray (2002, p. 1) highlights the role of leisure for disabled people as "an important aspect of our lives allowing us to expand our horizons through the development of our interests, whilst at the same time giving us the opportunity to meet and interact with others holding similar interests". Murray emphasises that, as with non-disabled people, disabled people are likely to make new friends through leisure pursuits.

Although Beames & Atencio (2008) note the positive effect outdoor and residential experiences may have in building strong bonds and social capital between participants, Murray (2002) rightly points out that a single isolated experience is unlikely to be sufficient for lasting friendships. Opportunities need to be available for the social activity to continue back in the home environment to enable a continuity of contact with the new-found friends so as to provide some long-term benefit, although this is perhaps easier nowadays with electronic social media.

Increased independence was seen as a goal by both purchasers and providers in Phase 3, as an outcome by visiting leaders in Phase 1, by participants in the evaluations in Phase 2 and by participants with physical disabilities and the significant others for those with intellectual impairments in the interviews in Phase 4. This concurrs with Devine & Dawson's (2010) findings that increased independence was a reported outcome in American camps for people with disabilities and that this was seen to transfer to the home environment. The Phase 4 interviews with significant others identified

the residential experience as making a significant contribution to independence and this concurs with the opinions of by teachers in R. Williams' (2012) study with non-disabled school children.

In all four phases of this study, an increase in confidence has been cited as an important benefit. Increased self-confidence is also a frequently reported outcome of outdoor education programmes with non-disabled people. Recent examples include R. Williams' (2012) and Dismore & Bailey's (2005) studies into primary school children in the UK, Amos & Reiss' (2012) large-scale evaluation of a residential outdoor education programme for science in secondary schools in London, and in Sibthorp, Paisley, Furman, & Gookin's (2008) study of adult participants on a North American programme.

With respect to disabled people Murray (2002) also saw recreational activities as an opportunity for disabled people to develop their confidence and self-esteem and this was supported by Devine & Dawson (2010) who showed 92% of participants on an Amercian camp programme for people with craniofacial disabilities reported gains in confidence and that these gains remained present six months later.

With the exception of some urban programmes, learning about the natural environment has for a long time been an integral part of outdoor education. Early writers such as T. Parker & Meldrum (1973) saw the opportunity to contrast the home surroundings with the environment of the residential outdoor centre as an educational justification for travelling long distances to remote and wild areas. Latterly writers have pointed out the need for greater environmental awareness and environmental responsibility and consider this as a fundamental purpose of outdoor education (G. Cooper, 2010; P. J. Higgins, 2009). The Calvert Trust has the countryside as a key component in their mission statement as both a location for the activities and for aesthetic appreciation (see Chapter 1, Section 1.5.3). Their three Centres are located at the heart of some of the most outstanding countryside in Great Britain so it would be expected that at least some aspect of the natural environment

would make an impression on the participants. In addition, Nicol (2001) points out that many instructors working in the outdoors have a personal philosophy that includes a degree of ecological sensitivity and respect for nature. The role model presented by the instructor in their approach to the natural environment is likely to have a major influence on participants' behaviour (Outdoor Education Advisors Panel, 2005). Despite the above, reference to the natural environment was almost entirely absent from the responses in this research. This phenomenon may be attributable to a number of factors or a combination of these and the reasons may differ across the three Centres.

One cause could be a failure to focus on environmental aspects by the instructional staff. There is evidence to suggest this is not the case. One Centre had instructors and managers who demonstrated their personal commitment to the environment, as described by Nicol (2001), through their responses to the interviews in Phase 3. That Centre was also registered with the John Muir Award and delivered a number of programmes to this standard of environmental engagement. In another Centre, a visiting trip organiser commented that the instructors were "talking non-stop about environmental things and they tended to be really interesting" (Ken's teacher in Phase 4). When this teacher was asked why she thought aspects of the environment had not been reflected in the pupils' responses she commented that "the only activity which is in an 'environmental situation' is the canoeing". Sally (Phase 4 participant) also referred to the environment in which the activities took place when comparing two Centres, indicating her preference for the Centre where the activities were undertaken in the natural environment away from the Centre, as opposed to those conducted on-site in a man-made environment.

A further cause may be that environmental issues were considered less important for the individual's development in relation to the outdoor education experience than the other reported benefits and as a result not noted as an outcome by the respondents. Bauer (2013, p. 13) points out that a "beautiful

setting" made little difference to the quality of the experience for adventure tourists in Ireland as "the environment was not the aspect they were most concerned about". If Calvert Trust visitors' philosophy is closer to adventure tourists than those taking part in more formal outdoor education, then it is likely that a similar importance is attached to the environment.

Whatever the cause for the lack of reference to the natural environment by participants, the Calvert Trust may wish to consider exactly what role the countryside and the natural environment should play in their programmes. Conducting the activities on-site in sheltered man-made environments has advantages in terms of reduced travel time and cost to take part in the activities whilst at the same time increasing comfort to the participant and extending the season for certain activities. However, in providing this sheltered environment the participant is distanced from a close engagement with the natural world. Being *at* a Centre in the countryside is not the same as "the challenge of outdoor activities *in* the countryside" (Mission Statement Calvert Trust, 2001). The physical environment is seen by many to contribute to the outdoor experience and becomes part of the challenge and developmental process (Kimball & Bacon, 1993; Neill, 2007; Sibthorp, 2003a). As a result, the removal of the natural environment may reduce the extent to which "people with disabilities achieve their potential" (Mission Statement Calvert Trust, 2001). The opportunities for meaningful engagement and real appreciation of the natural environment may become lost, along with the potential benefits, if the landscape is being "relegated to nothing more than a 'backdrop' rather than a place of inherent learning interest and significance" (Beames, et al., 2012, p. 13).

Throughout this study respondents have been asked to identify what they considered to be the long-term benefits of participation in outdoor education and the impact that these may have on the lives of the participants. There has been the recognition throughout that unless the respondent had a long-term view of themselves or participants post-visit then any response as to the long-term impact would be conjecture.

As the research progressed it became apparent that both a number of organisers and a number of respondents did have long-term relationships with the Calvert Trust and may have observed changes in their own behaviour or the behaviour of participants over a number of years. For some participants the impact on their life could be related back to a specific earlier outdoor education experience.

Many of the visiting leaders in Phase 1 were likely to have witnessed the effect of the Calvert Trust experience on participants from their organisation who had previously taken part in the programme that they were reporting on, as over 80% of the bookings at the Lake District Centre were from repeat customers. These respondents had been specifically asked for their opinion of the long-term benefits and it may be assumed that they will have related the question back to their experiences with previous participants.

In Phase 3, one of the criteria for the customer respondents was that they had had more than one visit to a Calvert Trust Centre. In this phase, the longest known customer relationship with the Calvert Trust was by a respondent who had visited the Calvert Trust 18 times over 35 years and one of the participants in Phase 4 had been a member of this group and had visited the Calvert Trust 14 times over 27 years. Other long-standing relationships in Phase 4 included a participant who visited annually for ten years and a participant who related many responses back to a single previous experience 15 years earlier. Many other respondents had experience of previous visits and had known participants over a number of years post-visit, for example throughout the participants' school careers. These respondents had the potential to witness any step-change in behaviour and whether this behavioral change was sustained.

The following quotes are all by those with extended experience of living or working with those with disabilities who had attended a course and were made in response to questions relating to any long-term benefits of outdoor

education experiences obtained by participants in Phases 3 and 4 of this study.

> Our students demonstrate increased maturity, confidence, independence and sociability … this is a generalisation based on observation. (Teacher Phase 3 with visits over approx. 8 years)

> Participation is life-changing to individuals. They build confidence and enable individuals to identify what is possible. We know that participation helps people to cope positively with their injury and feel that life is more manageable. Many participants remark how this was a building block for where they are now or what they want to achieve. For example, realising that if getting up a mountain is possible then everyday obstacles in the way of getting to work or of participating in a full family, recreational and social life, can also be overcome. (Rehabilitation group organiser for over 6 years)

> … a belief that they can do things and achieve things which is a belief in themselves. This impacts upon how they see their future opportunities. It might make them want to do physical activities that are good for their physical and mental well being, but also it means that they have the confidence to then go on and think I can do college, work, relationships, friendships. It is all about health, well being, aspirations and life. (Teacher Phase 4 with approx. 5 years experience)

> Encourages them to attempt things before saying they 'can't do'. Makes them more willing to participate in unknown areas. Go home and be more independent. Independence is a skill that has transferred in to the home environment. (Teacher Phase 4)

> My daughter has gained confidence in new relationships, will 'join in' more activities and with other people, as a result of the opportunities she has had at the Calvert Trust. (Parent ASD participant Phase 3 visits over approx. 15 years)

> Most definitely a long lasting benefit. We see changes during the week in most cases and, for those coming over a number of years, an increasing improvement in self-esteem and confidence. One day, parents will no longer be around or be unable to care for their [adult] children. Coping for themselves is a huge challenge

> and our weeks at Calvert Trust are helping individuals to stand on their own feet to a much greater extent than can be achieved by the usual social training methods. (Organiser for group with intellectual disabilities. 18 visits over 35 years)

> Whilst it was immediately apparent to us that [our son] was a lot more confident, we also received many testimonies from people who know him, all stating that he had changed over the summer holiday. What I cannot say for definite is whether the improvements in self-confidence and self-esteem will stay as high as when the participants first leave Calvert. In the case of my son, the initial change lasted 12 months or so, but then he certainly did not lose all the improvement gained. I imagine that other life experiences build or knock back an individual's self confidence. (Parent of participant with physical disability after 3 visits).

> This [experience] impacts on everything. I almost don't know where to begin. I would not be so able and confident as a person, confident in my own ability to do things, confident in my interactions with people, with situations. My whole world view has been broadened because I know that I am capable. Had I not had those chances I would have had a smaller world view, narrower horizons. I would have lower expectations of what I could do, and therefore I would not have achieved so much in so many ways. It has helped shape who I am. (Individual with visual impairment. 3 visits over 15 years)

These five group organisers, two parents and a participant themselves all have witnessed the benefits that a single or repeated outdoor education experiences have had on the lives of people with disabilities, and that the effect was lasting. Many of the other respondents testify that the benefits have had a long-term impact on the lives of participants but a number of the other respondents were not in a position to have witnessed such an effect.

Other research on self-reported long-term benefits of outdoor education carried out through retrospective questionnaires and interviews show findings similar to those in this study, although in non-disabled populations. The experience had made a difference in the lives of 90% of the 227 participants

in Daniel's (2003) study into a spiritual Outward Bound course. Gass et al. (2003) found positive changes 17 years after participation in a first-year student wilderness orientation program. Sibthorp, Paisley, Furman, & Gookin (2008) also identified long-term outcomes in 77 respondents on outdoor programmes held 13, 8 and 3 years previously. Telford (2010) found a positive long-term impact 12-35 years later in 72% of the 109 respondents in his study of outdoor education courses for schools in Scotland. Telford's study also identified participants that had changed their perspective on life following their one-off experiences which, along with a number of the comments above, also relate to the impact of one-off experiences, and this challenges Brookes (2003a, 2003b) opinion that one-off experiences of such short timescales are unlikely to affect such changes.

9.3.2 The outdoor activities which contributed to the outcomes

In Phase 1, the visiting leaders (n=502) identified the most worthwhile activity as *all activities* (34%), *climbing* (26%) and *canoeing* (17%) whilst the instructors working with the groups (n=703) identified *climbing* (28%), *challenge-course* (22%) and *walking* (11%) as the activities that worked well in delivering the intended outcomes. It was the *challenge* and *achievement* in the climbing and the *enjoyment, teamwork* and *challenge* in the canoeing which made these activities worthwhile from the visiting leaders' perspectives. The Centre instructors saw *challenge* (33%), *achievement* (30%) and *teamwork* (18%) as the important factors that delivered the outcomes.

In the qualitative study in Phase 3, high level decision makers (n=17) from customers identified *canoeing* (8/17) and *climbing* (including abseiling) (7) as the activities that delivered the outcomes. The providers (n=17) also saw *climbing* (8/17) and *canoeing* (5) as fulfilling this role. The *challenge,* and in particular *overcoming fears*, along with a *trust in others* emerged as attributes

of climbing, whilst those activities that required *teamwork* or provided a *sense of achievement* were also regarded as contributing to the learning outcomes.

In the qualitative study in Phase 4, participants (11/23) and the significant others (7/17) agreed that *climbing* was the activity that delivered many of the benefits and that it was the psychological and physical *challenge* combined with the *sense of achievement* that contributed to the learning.

Across the phases of the research two activities have been repeatedly identified as containing the attributes that are considered by respondents as key in delivering the positive outcomes of outdoor education and these are *climbing* and *canoeing*. The attributes associated with these activities are the *challenge*, *sense of achievement* and *teamwork*.

Climbing appears to be either a particularly formative experience or particularly memorable and for participants to succeed in something that they initially thought they would not be capable of achieving was considered to be an important learning outcome. Nearly half (11/23) of the participants in Phase 4 identified climbing as contributing to their learning from the activities. Climbing seems to have the ability to contribute to all the benefits identified in Section 9.3.2 above, but also appears to have the potential to 'singlehandedly' deliver many of these in a number of situations.

The physical activity and the magnitude of the challenge (the size of wall) created a task that many participants believed were outside their capabilities.

> We rock climbed up this wall, and when I first saw in, I didn't think I could do it" (Ellie, Phase 4).

Tim (Phase 4) commented on the physical challenge:

> The climbing wall [was] difficult to accomplish, different to any other experience.

and Ursula (Phase 4) on the psychological challenge caused by the height and sense of exposure:

> I was afraid of heights and these [climbing wall and abseiling] helped me overcome them.

Victor (Phase 4) described the role of perseverance in determining a successful outcome:

> I managed to get to the top, which I didn't think I was going to do. I had got half way up and wanted to go down, but I looked at myself and said 'keep going Victor you'll make it' and I did in the end. I encouraged myself to keep going. I was determined to keep going, to have a go at succeeding.

Participants felt success and elation through having successfully achieved this difficult task,

> the most challenging was climbing the wall. I felt 10ft tall after achieving this (Tim, Phase 4).

Participants could see how they could apply the learning to other situations:

> I think it taught me to try and be brave about new challenges (Ellie, Phase 4).

Climbing also encouraged responsibility, trust and teamwork:

> … being asked to belay a friend, I was frankly terrified as I had the safety of others in my hand, and people did that [belaying] to me (Quentin, Phase 4).

Hunt (1989) also attempted to connect attributes to particular activities, although respondents in his study found this difficult. Nonetheless climbing was considered good for self-confidence, self-esteem & self-awareness. Goldenberg, McAvoy, & Klenosky (2005) used a means-end analysis to show that different components of a course did produce different outcomes. Climbing was the most often cited activity for contributing to the outcomes with particular associations with 'determination/perseverance' and 'relationships with others/teamwork'.

Canoeing has also been recognised in this study as an activity that delivers the positive outcomes. Teamwork skills were identified by visiting leaders as an attribute closely associated with this activity. The interdependence of participants required to make this activity succeed is likely to be a major contributory factor to the teamwork outcomes and this interdependency is generated by the manner in which the activity is delivered. At the Calvert

Trust Centres canoeing is invariably presented in the form of Canadian open canoes rafted together. This construction provides the necessary stability for many participants with balance, mobility or conceptual impairments. Rafted canoes have the capacity to carry a number of people on a single craft and indeed a reasonable sized team is required to propel the vessel. Through this manning requirement the opportunities for teamwork and interdependency have been created. If rafted canoes are not required for stability then paddling in tandem or as a three in an un-stabilised canoe requires teamwork, good communications and tolerance if participants are to remain dry and have an enjoyable experience. The setting of appropriate prescribed goals can further help participants to focus on the teamwork element. Conversely, if solo canoes or kayaks were used there may be a greater degree of challenge, independence and personal achievement, however the attribute of teamwork would have diminished.

The instructional staff in Phase 1 identified the *challenge course* and *walking* as other activities that were well suited to achieve the programme objectives particularly those of teamwork, challenge and achievement. The ability to create or modify tasks to generate interdependency between participants and a need for teamwork is easy in the contrived and controlled environment of the challenge course and can be used to illustrate good and poor performance. This concurs with Hunt's (1989) finding that problem solving tasks, as the challenge course was being used in this situation, improved teamwork, communications and relationships. The perseverance required on a hill walk with the sense of achievement in reaching the summit and the associated reward of achievement in the face of adversity combined with the view from the top may epitomise many of the learning aspects from outdoor education in this very straight forward activity.

Gassner & Russell (2008) examined the components of programmes which affected the long-term outcomes and found that expeditions and solos made a notable contribution. Solos are absent from the Calvert Trust courses and only a few have overnight expeditions. Nonetheless the concept of a journey

as a *petite* expedition is present in some programmes. Two of the instructors in Phase 3 noted the power of the expeditions on the learning outcomes for participants. Hunt (1989, p. 110) also found that expeditions contributed "across the spectrum" towards the reported outcomes.

9.3.3 Differences in outcomes between different disabilities

There were differences in opinions across the respondents in Phase 3 as to whether different outcomes were obtained through outdoor education by those with different disabilities. Some considered that the benefits were the same for everyone whilst others saw the benefits as being different for every individual. Seven respondents from this phase who had first-hand experience of working in the outdoors with people with a variety of disabilities tried to articulate the differences. For those with physical impairments the benefits included a *realisation of ability*, *skills for daily living* (e.g. wheelchair or transfer skills) and a *support network,* whilst for those with intellectual impairments *interpersonal skills* and *social opportunities* were seen as the benefits.

In the Phase 4 participants' responses, there were notable differences between the learning outcomes and the impact these were considered to have on the individual's life between those with physical and intellectual disabilities, although attention is again drawn to the small sample size (n=23). Those with physical impairments reported a *realisation of ability* and *activities they could do in the countryside* as learning outcomes whilst those with intellectual impairments reported *overcoming fear* and *tenacity*. None of these learning outcomes were reported by participants in the other disability category. Many of those with physical impairments (6/13) also reported a *changed outlook on life* as a result of their outdoor education experiences and this impact was not reported by any of those with intellectual impairments.

The rehabilitation courses for those with acquired spinal cord injury appeared to be effective in delivering a number of the intended aspects of rehabilitation

for this sub-section of participants. Participants reported an improvement in wheelchair, transfer and life skills (dressing, looking normal and even holding a beer glass) as a result of the programme. Issues such as providing opportunities for continued physical and recreational activity appeared to be addressed for an injury that benefitted physiologically by exercise (Sadowsky & McDonald, 2009). In addition, an acquired spinal cord injury frequently involves young and active people who had an above average involvement in physical activity before injury (Lee, Dattilo, Kleiber, & Caldwell, 1996). As a result, these individuals may wish to continue with activities they had previously found to be enjoyable (Kennedy & Smith, 1990). Post-injury, many people with spinal cord injuries have the time available and even the financial resources to be able to pursue activities of their choice and the outdoor education courses offered a range of possible options for future activity. The opportunity to maintain links with the countryside was an outcome reported by all three adults with acquired spinal cord injury, although it must be noted that all of them had close connection with the outdoors before their injury. Finally these three adults attending rehabilitation courses for people with spinal cord injury reported themes of recovering a focus or purpose of life within their changed capabilities and identity. This was common with other programmes (Beringer, 2004; Hitzig, et al., 2012). Even the young child with a spinal cord injury had the opportunity to realise that he was not excluded from all the “fun activities” that his able-bodied peers enjoyed.

From these findings it becomes clear that the backgrounds of the participants and their life experiences, both of which were impacted on by their disability, have an effect on what that person hopes to gain from their involvement and therefore those things they take from the programme. Zoerink (1989) also reported substantial differences between people with congenital disabilities, acquired disabilities and non-disabled people with respect to their social and recreational experiences which he puts down to the social situation and stigma attached to the disability.

Three contrasting situations from Phase 4 of this study are used to further illustrate this point.

Isla was a pupil who attended a mainstream school and had a severe hearing impairment. Due to her difficulties in communicating she had only a small social circle and felt very isolated. She was very shy as she lacked confidence in social situations particularly with strangers. Isla was impelled to attend an outdoor education course specifically for young people with hearing impairments from across the county. Through this course she met others who were in similar situations as herself and enjoyed both the activities and social time with them. She made friends and developed a support network of those with similar impairments and gained confidence in social situations at school and home, so becoming less isolated. These outcomes were those planned by the organiser.

Amy was an active professional adult who recently acquired a spinal cord injury. Becoming a wheelchair user had changed everything in her life. This included the activities she enjoyed, her access to the countryside, her home, how she saw herself and this affected her persona and her relationship with others. Through her rehabilitation course at the Calvert Trust she identified how she could continue to be active in the countryside, how she could be more mobile and she met other people with the same disability who became part of her support network showing her how to address specific issues relating to her disability. The combination of the above gave Amy a new circle of friends, greater confidence in facing her new life and in returning to socialise with non-disabled people. Assisting with rehabilitation was the overarching aim of the course organiser and Amy's experiences helped in many aspects of her rehabilitation.

Ursula was an adult with Down's syndrome who lived in supported housing and undertook some part-time voluntary work. She regarded her visits to the Calvert Trust as a holiday that gave her the opportunity to be active, which she enjoyed, and to socialise with people her "own age and older". Through

her ‘holidays’ she learnt about the activities, gained confidence in meeting new people, speaking up and being more assertive. Through the activities she overcame her fear of heights and on return home she continued to be more active. The organisers saw the purpose of the course to help people with intellectual impairments improve confidence and independence so helping them with their future lives and better enabling them to fit into the wider society in which they lived.

These three individuals with their different starting points attended courses which aimed to provide different outcomes and as a result different outcomes were achieved. Both the individuals’ and the organisers’ aims of the outdoor education programmes were driven by the specific needs of the participants. These needs were related to the individual’s disabilities and the impact that these had on their lives. Through this purposeful approach it may be seen that those with different disabilities will probably achieve different outcomes from their outdoor education experiences.

This study did not attempt to investigate whether people with different disabilities attending the same programme of activities attained different outcomes. If it is accepted that an individual’s disability will have an influence on both the starting point and the ‘lens’ through which they view their experience then it follows that the outcomes, even from the same programme, are also likely to be different. If the intention is to maximise the potential outcomes for participants from their outdoor education experiences, those with different disabilities should embark on different programmes that take into account the varying starting points, the needs of the individuals and the differing aims.

9.3.4 The influence of the delivery and context on the outcomes

In Phase 1 a large majority of the visiting leaders (75%) using the Lake District Centre considered the instructors as *the* factor that helped to achieve

the aims of their programme, however, the aims were mainly educationally focussed (see Chapter 5, Figure 5.3).

In Phase 2 the visiting leaders, but not the participants, were asked whether the instructional staff were “professional and friendly” (see Appendix A.6.1) and 99% of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with this statement. Neither the leaders nor the participants were asked if the instructors had made any contribution to the learning or transfer.

In Phase 3 all the customers agreed that the role of the staff was providing support and encouragement to participants (17/17) and both customers and providers recognised the importance for instructors to understand the individual’s needs (9/34), to provide opportunities for reflection on what had been learnt (9) and helping transfer this to the individual’s everyday life (9).

In Phase 4, both the participants and the significant others recognised the role of the instructors had in facilitating access to the activities or the skills required for participation (21/40) and in providing support and encouragement (15). Despite many of the significant others having attended the programmes with participants (8/18) none of the significant others and most of the participants (22/23) did not identify the instructors as making a contribution to the participants learning, initiating reflection or helping transfer any learning to everyday life.

As outlined above, there was an inconsistency between the phases as to the contribution of the instructional staff to the learning outcomes of the participants. In Phase 4, the teachers who brought pupils on educational courses to the Kielder and Exmoor Centres understood that the identification of any learning and the transference of this back to the school or home environment to be part of their role. This was in contrast to the findings in Phase 1 at the Lake District Centre where the visiting leaders, many of whom were teachers (43%), highly valued the input of instructional staff in the task of obtaining the intended learning outcomes. It is noted, however, that in

Phase 4 there were no educational sector respondents from the Lake District Centre. Whether a greater recognition of the instructor's role in learning and transfer may have occurred if respondents from the education sector had been included in the respondents from the Lake District would be of interest. The two participants who recognised the role of the instructor as contributing to the learning both attended the Lake District Centre. Quentin considered that the instructors were "absolutely pivotal" in the learning he gained from the experience and the impact this had on his life. Tim recognised that the instructors made him "believe in myself", helped to provide him with the courage to try things and also to believe that "I can do anything if I really want to". It is noted that six of the remaining seven respondents from this Centre had intellectual impairments or acquired brain injury with memory loss and that none of the significant others reporting on participants from this Centre took part in the programme. A more balanced profile of respondents and significant others may have resulted in different findings, however, this is likely in any sample and particularly those with small numbers.

Overall, the contrast between the expectations of staff in the responses to Phase 3 and the behaviours reported on in Phase 4 is not understood. The Calvert Trust respondents' expectations of their instructors was to deliver feedback, provide opportunities for reflection (5/17) and help the participant transfer learning to the home environment (5/17) so it should be a concern to the organisation that this was not occurring, or seen to be occurring, by those whom it was intended to benefit.

Purchasers also identified providing feedback and opportunities for reflection (4/17) as well as helping the participant transfer learning (6/17) as a role for the instructors. How this learning could be used in the long-term and so help participants take away as much from the experience as possible was also identified as important in the Phase 3 responses, yet this role was not identified in the interviews with participants and significant others in Phase 4.

It is uncertain whether the expectations of the providers and purchasers were not being delivered or the work by the instructors in delivering these aspects of the programme was not recognised by the participants and significant others. The role of the instructor and the impact this may have on the outcomes for the participant would warrant further investigation through observation rather than relying on third party aspirations or recall of their experiences.

The contribution of the residential setting was only addressed in Phase 4 of this study. The residential setting was reported as contributing to the learning of the participants by increasing the *independence* through being away from home (15/40), improving the *social opportunities* (9) that had previously been reported as important for many respondents in the earlier phases and in providing a *change of environment* for the individual (9). R. Williams (2012) also found that the residential setting fostered independence and generated a social support network that assisted individuals to succeed at the activities.

In Phase 4 comments were received from one visit organiser that they would only attend a segregated Centre with their pupils and there were two negative experiences from participants who visited the Calvert Trust Centre that did not offer a segregated experience. In Phase 3, one of the concerns noted by the parents of disabled children with intellectual impairments, behavioural difficulties or overt physical disabilities was that their offspring would attract the attention of or disturb others. This encouraged these parents to seek a specialist or segregated provider as any adverse behaviour would be understood or tolerated rather than become the focus of attention or source of mirth. In North America, Schleien, McAvoy, Lais, & Rynders (1993) also identified attitudes of parents which were consistent with these.

In Phase 4, the comparative experiences of Lyn between the Exmoor and Kielder centres support the observations made by Devine (2004) in that inclusive leisure opportunities do not necessarily provide a positive outcome and that simply by providing contact is insufficient to enable positive attitudes

to form. Rather, as Allport (1954) described in outlining his contact theory, that it is the quality of the contact which is important in generating positive attitudes and without this quality the experience may generate greater distances between disabled and non-disabled people instead of providing a greater connection or understanding.

In Harris' (2006) study on an Outward Bound course for people with physical disabilities, there was disagreement amongst participants as to whether an integrated course would be a good idea. Those who supported integration considered the potential outcomes to be of benefit to the able-bodied participants in gaining knowledge about disability as opposed to a benefit to those with disabilities. Other participants considered that it would have to be a "strong person" to perform well in an integrated situation. There was a general feeling that a group of people with disabilities at least had disability in common with the ability to relate to each other and have a level of understanding, rather than being placed in a position where there was only hope that others would be tolerant of their needs.

9.4 Summary

The findings of this study have gone some way towards addressing the research questions posed in Chapter 4 in the context of the Calvert Trust as a provider and for the organisations, customers and participants that acted as respondents to this research.

The main benefits from participating in outdoor education for those with disabilities were reported as being an increase in confidence, independence, a realisation of abilities and opportunities for increasing social and support networks as well as practising social skills which help enhance friendships. The degree these outcomes are obtained differed across individuals and the three Calvert Trust Centres and this appeared to have been influenced by the reason for the visit and whether the customer was attending for recreational, educational or rehabilitative purposes.

The activities that contribute towards achievement of the reported outcomes were climbing, canoeing and if presented in an appropriate format the challenge course and walking. The attributes of these activities were the challenge, achievement in the face of adversity and the interpersonal or teamwork skills built up from working in a group with a common aim and a level of interdependency. Although high-thrill short duration activities were considered to contribute towards the achievement of the benefits for participants with disabilities, activities of longer duration requiring sustained effort might be required to maximise the learning and the long-term benefit from participation.

Variations in the life experiences of an individual, associated to that person's disability, did appear to have an influence on the outcomes of a programme of outdoor education. If the individual's disabilities and the aims or intended outcomes from participation were to be known at the programme design stage then the effectiveness in achieving the intended outcomes and thus the benefit to the individual could perhaps be improved. This in turn could increase the impact of the experience on the life of the participant.

The residential setting makes a contribution to the quality of the experience by increasing the opportunities to be or practise being independent. The residential setting also increases the opportunity for social interactions and enhances the dynamics within groups increasing peer support. The important role of the instructors in Phase 1 is contrasted with the general lack of recognition of the instructor's role in the learning of participants in Phase 4 and this would warrant further investigation as to the cause.

Throughout this study reference has been made to the three factors that were seen to impact on the outcomes of outdoor education; the *people*, the *programme* and the *process* used in supporting participant learning (Cason & Gillis, 1994; Prouty, et al., 2007). The findings from this research have provided some evidence to support the notion that the background of the people participating on outdoor education courses does influence the

outcomes they obtain. The background of an individual will include the life experiences that have been encountered and through its impact on a person's life, any disability will affect that individual's life experiences. The combination of life experiences and disability will influence both the individual and sponsoring organisation's aims and aspirations from participation in adventurous activities or outdoor education. There is evidence from this study that the outcomes of outdoor education are influenced by the aims for participation and the disability of the participants. Evidence from this research also supports the fact that the programme, in particular the activities undertaken, along with the style in which they are presented, are likely to affect the outcomes. There has been a consistency in the responses from participants, visiting leaders and instructors that the process of achieving success in overcoming a challenging task has delivered a new perception of ability for the individual. The removal of either the challenge or the sense of achievement as part of the process is likely to affect the feeling of success for the participant and as a result the learning outcome. This study has found no measurable differences in the level of challenge or achievement across the three Centres, however, there have been differences in a number of the learning outcomes with a greater self-reported perception of benefit from participants attending the Lake District Centre. This Centre has the potential to maintain the level of dissonance in the activities due to the continuity of instructional staff working with the participants. This Centre has also been observed to dedicate more time to reviewing so as to assist the learner to make sense of the experiences and transfer these back to the home environment. Nonetheless there is no evidence from this research to support that either of these factors has been causal to the increased learning outcomes, although the relevant theories would indicated that this is likely (P. J. Higgins & Nicol, 2002; Luckner & Nadler, 1997; S. Simpson, Miller, & Bocher, 2006).

Chapter 10

Concluding discussion

10.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter will summarise the main findings of the research conducted for this thesis and outline the recommendations for the Calvert Trust that might be drawn from these. The limitations of the research are discussed as are the recommendations for future research in this area.

10.2 Findings and recommendations

This study has attempted to address the following research questions:

1. What are the key benefits (if any) that participants gain from taking part in an outdoor education course at a Calvert Trust Centre?
2. Which outdoor activities are the most beneficial to the participants, and why?
3. Relative to their disabilities, do the participants' experiences differ with respect to the benefits of the programme, and which are the most valued activities?
4. How do the delivery and/or the context of the outdoor education courses, and the associated activities, influence participants' perceptions of these?

In Chapter 9, the main findings in relation to the research questions have been discussed in detail. As these findings have essentially been triangulated across the four individual studies contained within this thesis, this chapter presents them as a synthesis without specific reference to the individual studies from which the findings have been drawn. These are presented below, along with recommendations for the Calvert Trust which may assist in their work in these areas.

The major benefits for participants gained through the programmes have included new experiences, learning about the activities themselves and

learning about ways in which the countryside can be accessed by those with disabilities. The activities may have included a degree of challenge that can be seen as an experience in itself, along with a sense of achievement in overcoming that challenge or in having success in an activity.

The Calvert Trust provides many new experiences for those on their first visit, however, on subsequent visits the ability to offer further new experiences, as opposed to repeating activities previously experienced, is more difficult. Consideration needs to be given as to how new experiences can be offered to returning participants or how previously tried activities can be presented as genuinely progressive and thus underpin a further new experience for the participant.

The Calvert Trust must also consider how the activities can best be made challenging to participants as well as requiring a degree of perseverance in order to be successful, as high-thrill short-duration activities alone are unlikely to deliver the personal development benefits (Rubens, 1997) which are claimed in the Trust's publicity (Calvert Trust, 2011).

The nature of many of the activities undertaken can offer a degree of physical exercise, but on such short programmes this is unlikely to have a long-term health benefit for the participants. If a longer-term health benefit is desired as an outcome then the outdoor education experience must become a catalyst for continued physical exercise in everyday life. This could be achieved either through the continuation of the activities experienced or through increased exercise generally brought about through the Calvert Trust experience.

The Calvert Trust needs to work out how this 'exercise habit' can be transferred from the Centre programme to the everyday life of the participant, particularly when the barriers to participation in sport for those with disabilities are taken into account. An outreach project working with participants, visit organisers and local activity providers could be an effective, although expensive, means of addressing this issue.

The present study has shown the important contribution that both the activities and the residential experiences can make towards the social life of participants. The shared experiences of the activities provide openings for interactions with others, especially when the activity has involved teamwork or the interdependence of participants. The shared time in the residential setting provides additional social opportunities and these positive social experiences have led to the establishment of friendships and support networks for many participants.

If the Calvert Trust wishes to contribute to providing these important benefits for people with disabilities then thought must be given as how activities which promote social behaviours are incorporated into the design of the programmes. In addition, the Calvert Trust instructors should be aware of, or develop, a style of delivery for the activities that encourages the promotion of friendships, for use when this is appropriate. The incorporation of teamwork and interdependency between participants in a way that encourages participants to be more dependent on each other is likely to assist with this interaction, as opposed to relying on the instructors as the sole source of support, encouragement and knowledge. The development of friendships would be particularly important for visitors who do not come in pre-existing friendship groups or those who visit in small units such as families for whom meeting others may be an important goal. The chance of meeting and mixing with others would add to the quality of the experience. It is suggested that the opportunities for interaction are planned to be more than on a single activity or session as otherwise any relationships built would be little more than that of a passing acquaintance. An alumni network, using social media, could help promote the continuation of relationships and avoid friendships terminating at the end of the visit, with the social benefits of the experience being lost at this point.

Increased independence has been found to be both a goal of the Calvert Trust and visiting organisations, as well as being identified as an outcome for participants in some programmes. Increased independence has the potential

to make a notable difference to the lives of participants, those close to them and to wider society through reducing the need for assistance in a number of situations. This can have a positive impact on the individual, on others involved in assisting that person and on the national welfare budget.

The Calvert Trust should look to how participants' independence may be maximised through their programmes, and particularly how the aim of increasing independence could be more highly prioritised as a potential outcome for those attending the Exmoor Centre.

An increase in confidence has been cited as an important benefit of attending Calvert programmes by both participants and organisers and this has been seen to have an impact on participants' lives through their willingness to try new things and the ability to achieve things they did not think were possible. This has provided participants with the motivation to do or achieve more, as well as improved attitudes towards social relationships, school-work or paid employment.

Again the Calvert Trust may wish to consider how this important benefit can be maximised through their programmes as well as being transferred to the home environment.

Although the cause for the lack of engagement with the natural environment demonstrated in the feedback from participants is uncertain, the fact that it occurs should be of concern to the Calvert Trust as the countryside and appreciation of it are elements featuring prominently in the Calvert Trust mission statement (Chapter 1, Section 1.5.3). The relocation of the activities away from natural venues towards man-made alternatives is likely to be working against the organisation achieving the benefits outlined in its mission. The Calvert Trust may wish to re-consider exactly what role the countryside and the natural environment do play in their objectives and the fulfilment of their mission, and ensure that this is reflected in their

programmes and the venues for the ‘adventurous *outdoor* activities’ they offer.

Climbing appears to be either a particularly formative experience or particularly memorable for participants. Success in something that many participants initially thought to be beyond their capability has been reported as an important learning outcome. Canoeing has also been recognised in this study as an activity that delivers the positive outcome of teamwork, with the interdependence of participants likely to be a major contributory factor to this outcome.

With the positive outcomes reported to be delivered by these activities, the Calvert Trust needs to include climbing and/or canoeing in all programmes, and for all participants, whenever this is possible. The Calvert Trust may also wish to develop or include in their programmes other activities, either those that currently exist or new activities, which have similar attributes or deliver similar experiences as climbing and canoeing so as to maximise the valued learning outcomes from these activities.

There were notable differences between the outcomes obtained by those with physical and intellectual disabilities. A realisation of ability, activities they could do in the countryside and a changed outlook on life were reported as learning outcomes for those with physical disabilities whilst those with intellectual impairments reported overcoming fear and developing tenacity.

The different life experiences and differences in both aspirations and reported outcomes calls for the Calvert Trust to ensure that participants with different disabilities embark on different programmes that take into account the individuals’ diverse starting points, different needs and varying aims.

There was an inconsistency across the different phases of this research as to the contribution that the instructional staff made to the learning outcomes for participants. In recognising that the learning process is a major variable in the learning outcomes achieved in outdoor education programmes (as discussed

in Chapter 2), the Calvert Trust should perhaps make a greater effort to integrate more explicit teaching moments into the activity experience, so as to maximise the learning opportunities. There is a clear need to provide the instructors with training in techniques that assist with the learning process or which help the participants to reflect on their experiences. These must have an appropriate style in accord with both the purpose of the visit and the intellectual capabilities of the participants.

The findings suggest that the residential setting was a key element in the outdoor education experience of participants. Being away from the home environment with its built in support systems increased the independence of participants. The residential element also provided increased social opportunities which have been reported as an essential part of the programmes. Both the residential environment and the distance from home offered a change of surroundings for participants and this was identified as beneficial by organisers. The fact that two of the Calvert Trust Centres offered a setting that was exclusively for disabled people whilst one Centre offered an environment that included both disabled and non-disabled people, caused a degree of confusion and dissatisfaction for some participants or group organisers. It is recommended that the Calvert Trust decides on a consistent model to be adopted and/or clearly communicates its policy for its different Centres to its customers.

10.3 Limitations

There are a number of limitations brought about by the research design and execution of this study. These are outlined below.

The respondent sample was self-selecting through participants or visit organisers choosing to take part in an outdoor education programme at the Calvert Trust. In addition, respondents at both organisational and individual level had to first agree to participate in the research, as opposed to being randomly selected. The concerns with a self-selecting group are that participants are more positively disposed to the experience in the first place

and are more likely to report outcomes that match their expectations. A further limitation was that there were no control groups from other providers of outdoor education for those with disabilities with which to compare the findings of those attending the Calvert Trust courses. This is unavoidable in a study of this nature where the researchers have no influence over the agreement to participate by subjects and when working within an organisation where no feasible control groups exist.

All the qualitative and quantitative data presented in this thesis were post-intervention and self-reported as opposed to using a pre-test/post-test design combined with recognised and tested measurement tools. Again this was a weakness recognised at the outset and the decision was taken to use this mixed methodology for pragmatic reasons, and to minimise the impact that the research would have on the overall experience the research subjects had of participating in outdoor education.

The inability to relate the demographic data to individual responses in the quantitative data severely restricted the ways the data in Phase 2 could be analysed, and as a result the uses to which these data could be put. Comparisons could not be made by age or disability and the differences in non-responses across centres could not be investigated to an appropriate degree.

The small sample sizes in Phase 4 limits the extent to which the respondents can be said to represent adequately the full range of those with disabilities and also the potential range of benefits that this specific grouping might obtain from participation in outdoor education. The difficulties of gaining access to respondents, their geographical spread and the restrictions of the time-frame for conducting the interviews and completing this research made it difficult to include more respondents. In a similar vein in Phase 3, a greater number of respondents from a wider variety of backgrounds would have increased the representativeness of the customer sample.

The focus on the Calvert Trust as only one organisation offering outdoor education for people with disabilities was a limitation as participants using other providers and centres may have different experiences and may obtain different outcomes. The Calvert Trust does offer a range of experiences across its three Centres, and similar principles of outdoor education were demonstrated by high-level informants in a comparative specialist Centre, so it seems reasonable to surmise that participants' experiences at the Calvert Trust are unlikely to be unique to these Centres.

This study has attempted to hear the voices of those with intellectual impairments. Although it is highly appropriate that these respondents were included in the interview research, there are known limitations of working with this population. These difficulties include obtaining access to respondents and obtaining responses of sufficient depth to be of value from those interviewed, particularly from those with severe intellectual impairments.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods and the chosen data collection techniques used have brought a perspective on outdoor education for people with disabilities that has previously not been reported. However, the case-study approach as well as the focus on a single organisation, when taken in conjunction with the restrictions in relating demographic data to responses in the first two phases and with the small numbers of respondents and the qualitative nature of the interviews in the latter phases, make the options for making 'grand' or 'propositional generalisations' of the findings rather limited (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4). Nevertheless, the amalgamation of the findings from the four research phases within the evaluation, carried out from a variety of perspectives, has produced many complimentary and some contrasting findings. This 'crystallisation' of knowledge may permit at least some of the above generalisations concerning the value of outdoor education for people with disabilities that could be applied to other centres or situations where outdoor education experiences take place.

10.4 Informing future research

Within the time frame available for the present study it was never going to be possible to address the research questions posed in this thesis in the depth they deserve. However, in addition to specific recommendations for the Calvert Trust this thesis has contributed to the understanding of those factors which need to be taken into account when exploring the value of outdoor education for people with disabilities.

Access to research participants with disabilities will invariably pass through gate-keepers of some description and the attitude of these gate-keepers to research generally or to the specific research being undertaken can create barriers when conducting research into this sector of the population. In addition, there are inherent difficulties in collecting high quality data from those who have an intellectual impairment, especially those with severe impairments. Taking into account all of the above issues, the problems of sampling and of collecting data from those with disabilities should not be underestimated.

In conducting future research into the Calvert Trust, it would be of interest to understand better those aspects of the experience that differed across the three Centres and the contribution that these differences made to the outcomes obtained by participants. One method of achieving this could be a study which followed the lived experiences of participants from their home environment through to their experiences at the different Calvert Trust Centres and then recorded their experiences upon return to their home. This could provide an in-depth understanding of the impact of the various aspects of the outdoor education experience on individuals' lives. It would also help in understanding how information regarding the intended outcomes and the individual differences of the people visiting the Calvert Trust are taken into account, how the programmes are designed to accommodate these differences and the processes used in order to assist participants with their learning and in transferring this back to their everyday lives. If this could be

linked to pre-test/post-test measurements relating to the aims of the participants and/or their organisations a better understanding of "what works" could be obtained.

This study has found that the impact of the outdoor education experience was long-lasting for a number of participants for whom a longitudinal perspective could be obtained. However, the research was not specifically designed to capture this information. A study designed to evaluate the impact of the experience over the long-term would give greater weight to the long-term value of outdoor education.

A better understanding of the perception of outdoor education within the wider disabled society could be obtained by investigating the attitude to outdoor education of those who have never contemplated taking part in a programme of outdoor education. A different perspective on the value of and the perceived barriers to participation might also be obtained through research into those who choose not to take part in a programme of outdoor education after having initially made contact with an outdoor centre to find out more about the programmes on offer. Along these lines, a further area of interest would be to investigate how the outdoor education experience was perceived by those who did not return to the Calvert Trust after their first visit. This would help the organisation gain a better understanding of those aspects of the provision that failed to meet customer expectations or of those aspects that were not of real value.

An alternative focus of future research could be to investigate the impact that participation in outdoor education programmes by disabled people has on the attitudes of employers and other influential members of society whose decisions have the potential to affect the lives of disabled people. A study that contrasted the attitude of others towards those with disabilities who had participated in adventurous outdoor activities with those who had not, could be of value in assessing the social capital that the outdoor education experience provided. Also of interest would be whether this opinion differed

between participants whose only experience was through an outdoor centre as opposed to those for whom the adventurous outdoor activities had become a lifestyle choice.

The inclusion/segregation debate could be informed by a study that compared specialist/segregated providers of outdoor education with the many centres and organisations who accommodate people with disabilities as part of an inclusive programme. The experiences and outcomes of the participants with disabilities could be investigated and compared across these two distinct delivery models.

Another area for future research would be to broaden the focus of the research from the Calvert Trust across other outdoor centres specialising in working with people with disabilities to identify the degree to which the outcomes varied across Centres run by different organisations.

10.5 Concluding remarks

From the results of this investigation, it can be seen that a residential outdoor education experience, even one of short duration, can be effective in developing confidence and independence in individuals with disabilities. These changes seem to have the potential to be long-lasting and in some cases have clearly had a major impact on the life of that individual. This would appear to have been brought about through changing the perceptions of the individuals as to what it is possible for them to accomplish and as a result helping them to achieve their potential in life.

In order to maximise the benefits, the three key influences on the outcomes, the *people*, the *programme* and the *process* must be central in the thinking of those designing the outdoor education experience, as without consideration of the interaction of these three elements there is the potential for the experience to fail to meet the needs of those it is intended to benefit and to be ineffective in delivering the intended outcomes, or in the case of the Calvert Trust, in fulfilling their stated mission.

Through participation in adventurous outdoor activities, people with disabilities can demonstrate competence, judgement and a higher level of determination than a non-disabled person achieving the same skill or level of engagement within an activity. Through this, the perceptions of the ability of the individual or of disabled people generally may be altered in society and this in turn may lead to a greater level of acceptance, inclusion and equality for those with disabilities.

An outdoor education experience in a residential setting, as provided by the Calvert Trust, needs to be considered in terms of the ‘whole experience’. From this perspective, the quality of the experience and the potential learning outcomes are very different to outdoor education programmes that take place on a daily basis or close to the home environment. With the substantial resources of time, staff and money invested in providing a quality experience over an extended period in a location remote from home, it is imperative that the maximum benefit is obtained for participants. Both the Calvert Trust and visiting leaders have a responsibility to ensure that the intended learning outcomes are clearly stated, achieved and transferred back to everyday life in order to justify the investment by the many stakeholders, and to have the greatest impact both on the life of the individual and on wider society’s views of the capabilities of those with disabilities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A.1.1: Glossary of terms

Impact

The change, effect or benefit that results from the services or activities on a wider society than its direct users. It is often long term, broad and sustainable and can include affecting policy decisions at government level.

Inputs

Resources put into an organisation to carry out an activity. Inputs may be human, material, financial or expressed as time.

Outcomes

The changes, benefits, learning or other effects that happen as a result of services and activities provided by an organisation.

Outputs

The activities, services and products provided by an organisation.

Stakeholders

The people who have an interest in the activities of an organisation. This includes staff, volunteers, users and their carers, trustees, funders, purchasers, donors, supporters and members.

Appendix A.2.1: Categorisation of Benefits

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Categorisation of benefits

Psychological	**Sociological**	**Educa**tion	**Physical**
Self-concept	Compassion	Outdoor education	Fitness
Confidence	Group cooperation	Nature awareness	Skills
Self-efficacy	Respect for others	Conservation education	Strength
Sensation seek	Communication	Problem solving	Coordination
Actualisation	Behaviour feedback	Value clarification	Catharsis
Well-being	Friendship	Outdoor techniques	Exercise
Personal test	Belonging	Improved academics	Balance

Wankel, L. M., & Berger, B. G. (1991). The personal and social benefits of sport and physical activity. In B. Driver, P. J. Brown & G. L. Peterson (Eds.), *Benefits of Leisure*. Pensylvania: Venture Publishing.

PHYSICAL HEALTH BENEFITS
cardio respiratory fitness
muscular endurance
Muscular strength
flexibility
bone structure
weight management

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING
personal growth
Personal enjoyment
anxiety & tension reduction
depression reduction

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Rickinson, M., Dillon, J., Teamey, K., Morris, M., Choi, M., Sanders, D., et al. (2004). *A Review of Research on Outdoor Learning.* Shrewsbury Field Studies Council.

COGNITIVE IMPACTS – concerning knowledge, understanding and other academic outcomes

AFFECTIVE IMPACTS – encompassing attitudes, values, beliefs and self-perceptions

INTERPERSONAL / SOCIAL IMPACTS – including communication skills, leadership and teamwork.

PHYSICAL / BEHAVIOURAL IMPACTS - relating to physical fitness, physical skills, personal behavious and social actions.

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Category/subdomain	Examples or other names
A. Academic	
1. Academic-direct	Mathematics, reading
2. Academic-general	GPA, problem solving
B. Leadership	
3. Conscientiousness	Attention to detail
4. Decision making	Reasoned decision making
5. Leadership-general	Task leadership
6. Leadership-teamwork	Seek and use advice, consultative leadership
7. Organizational ability	Organizational competence, active initiative
8. Time management	Time efficiency
9. Values	Values orientation
10. Goals	Setting goals
C. Self-concept	
11. Physical ability	
12. Peer relations	Self peers, self-same sex, opposite sex self-concept
13. General self	Self-values, self-general, self-esteem, self-concept
14. Physical appearance	
15. Academic	Self–problem solving
16. Confidence	Potency, emotional self
17. Self-efficacy	Self-control, self-sufficient, self-reliance
18. Family	Self-parents, self-home
19. Self-understanding	Self-honesty, self-disclosure, self-criticism, self-awareness
20. Well-being	Life success, satisfaction, positive endeavor
21. Independence	Autonomy
D. Personality	
22. Femininity	
23. Masculinity	
24. Achievement motivation	
25. Emotional stability	Emotional control, emotional understanding
26. Aggression	Reduce aggression
27. Assertiveness	Forthrightness
28. Locus of control	Internal locus of control
29. Maturity	
30. Neurosis reduction	Non repression, defensive, reduction in malaise
E. Interpersonal	
31. Cooperation	Productive teamwork, group cooperation
32. Interpersonal communication	Likeability, trusting and listening
33. Social competence	Social aptitude, sociability, friendliness
34. Behavior	Positive behavior, reducing behavior problems
35. Relating skills	Evaluation from others, sensitivity to others
36. Recidivism	Reduction in recidivism
F. Adventuresome	
37. Challengeness	Venturesome, challenge seeking, adventurousness
38. Flexibility	Openness to new ideas, adaptability, resourceful, imaginative
39. Physical fitness	Sit-ups, physical ability, resting pulse, physical strength
40. Environmental awareness	Wilderness appreciation, in tune with nature

Appendix A.4.1: Ethics approval

MORAY HOUSE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Application Form

(This form is for completion electronically)

This form should be used for all research carried out under the auspices of Moray House School of Education. A four-tier system of ethical approval has been developed, administered by the Ethics Sub-committee and the Research Support Office. The levels within the system are explained below. Please tick the appropriate box to indicate which level applies to your research.

All applications should be submitted well in advance of a required date of approval, particularly in the case of Level 3. Applications will normally be processed within 2-4 weeks, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Level 0: If your research project is completely desk-based, i.e. does not involve participants you are not obliged to apply for ethical approval. However, you may find it useful to do so to ensure that you are conforming to confidentiality guidelines. ☐
Level 1: applies to 'straightforward' non-intervention, observational research (e.g. analysis of archived data, classroom observation, use of standardised questionnaires). ☐
Level 2: covers novel procedures or the use of atypical participant groups – usually projects in which ethical issues might require more detailed consideration but were unlikely to prove problematic. ☑
Level 3: applies to research which is potentially problematic in that it may incorporate an inherent physical or emotional risk to participants. ☐

Colleagues are reminded that all researchers working directly with children and other groups as listed in 4.3 in the application form should ensure they have prior Disclosure Scotland clearance (formerly Scottish Criminal Record Office). This is a confidential process and forms are available from hr.hss@ed.ac.uk. Members of staff who have **current** clearance through GTC membership are already covered.

Applicants must indicate their commitment to following the ethical guidelines appropriate to their research (e.g. BERA, BSA, BPS, BASES).

Name……John Crosbie…… Department …PESLS….

Ethical guidelines followed……British Psychological Society……..

SECTION 1: PROJECT DETAILS

1.1 Title of Project

An investigation into the benefits of outdoor education for people with disabilities visiting the Calvert Trust outdoor centres.

1.2 Proposed start date

May 2010

1.3 Duration of the project

4 - 6 months

1.4 List the following details of the Principal Investigator, and any Co-Investigator(s)

Principal Investigator	
Name:	John Crosbie
Title:	PhD student
Department:	PESLS

1.5 If funding is necessary to proceed with the study, has it been secured?

YES √ NO □

If YES, give details of the agency/agencies supporting the project. If a funding submission is planned, give details of the agency/agencies to which a funding application(s) has been made.

Calvert Trust,

Zurich Community Trust

1.6 Does the project require the approval of any other institution and/or ethics committee? YES □ **NO** √

If YES, give details and indicate the status of the application at each other institution or ethics committee (i.e. submitted, approved, deferred, rejected).

SECTION 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH

Please attach a brief description (no more than 500 words) of your proposal. This should include, as appropriate, the aims and objectives of the study, the research question and/or hypothesis to be investigated, details of the sample, and data collection methods.

BACKGROUND:

This research is the third and final phase of a sequence of studies in relation to my PhD sponsored by the Calvert Trust. It is focused on the three Calvert Trust residential outdoor education centres, all of which specialise in working with people with disabilities.

AIM:

The aim is to identify the outcomes of participation in outdoor education for people with disabilities.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Ascertain what the Calvert Trust, its clients and participants the activities view as the intended outcomes of participation in outdoor education programmes through an email survey of high-level informants.
2. Ascertain whether the Calvert Trust and / or its client's aspirations are unique or that they reflect common thinking in this field, by comparing the above findings with another outdoor Centre also specialising in working with people with disabilities.
3. Ascertain what the experience means to the participants through in-depth interviews conducted post-visit to the Centres.
4. Ascertain whether the intended outcomes are being delivered to the participants through a questionnaire survey with participants and visiting group leaders.

Using the above survey:

5. Ascertain if different outcomes are being delivered by the different Calvert Trust Centres by a comparison of the findings.
6. Ascertain if outdoor education has a different impact on various disability categories through a comparison of the outcomes achieved across those disability categories.
7. Ascertain whether specific outcomes are best delivered through particular outdoor activities.
8. Ascertain if there are particular processes that are deemed to assist the participants obtaining specific outcomes.

SAMPLES AND DATA COLLECTION:

Interviews with high-level informants will be undertaken with representatives of the Calvert Trust and its clients to indentify the intended outcomes. The sample will be selected for their position within the organisations or their representativeness of a customer sector or type. These interviews will be conducted via email using a semi-structured format. Points of interest generated in the answers, or clarification of points made, will be followed up by further email correspondence, as necessary. This process will be mirrored for the organisation selected for the comparative study.

From the responses to the above, a questionnaire will be designed which will be administered to all participants and group leaders attending the Calvert Trust Centres over a 4 to 6 month period. These participants will be self-selecting as they will have chosen to use the services of the Calvert Trust. Completion of the questionnaire will be voluntary but as this will form part of the Centres' post-visit evaluation system, completion will be encouraged.

From the questionnaire returns, a number of participants and group leaders will be selected from across the three Calvert Trust Centres to be representative of customer sector or type to participate in in-depth, follow-up interviews. These will be conducted face-to-face shortly after participation and will either be recorded then transcribed, or directly loaded into analysis software.

SECTION 3: POTENTIAL RISKS TO PARTICIPANTS

3.1 Could the research induce any psychological stress or discomfort in the participants? YES □ **NO** √

If YES, state the nature of the risk and what measures will be taken to deal with such problems.

The lead researcher has experience in working with the target groups and considers that any stress is unlikely given the nature of the research. However, in the event of any discomfort being apparent, the interviews will be terminated.

3.2 Does the research require any physically invasive or potentially physically harmful procedures? YES □ **NO** √

If YES, give details and outline procedures to be put in place to deal with potential problems.

3.3 Does the research involve the investigation of any illegal behaviours? YES □ **NO** √

If YES, give details.

3.4 Is it possible that this research will lead to the disclosure of information about child abuse or neglect? **YES** √ NO □

If YES, indicate the likelihood of such disclosure and your proposed response to this. If there is a real risk of such disclosure triggering an obligation to make a report to Police, Social Work or other authorities, a warning to this effect must be included in the Information and Consent documents.

It is possible, but very unlikely, that such a disclosure will occur during this research, however, if anything is revealed that would be of concern to the authorities, then they will be informed. Information sheets will alert participants to this requirement.

3.5 Is there any purpose to which the research findings could be put that could adversely affect participants? YES □ **NO** √

If YES, describe the potential risk for participants of this use of the data. Outline any steps that will be taken to protect participants.

3.6 Could this research adversely affect participants in any other way?

YES □ **NO √**

If YES, give details and outline procedures to be put in place to deal with such problems.

3.7 Could this research adversely affect members of particular groups of people?

YES □ **NO √**

If YES, describe these possible adverse effects and the protection to be put in place against them.

3.8 Is this research expected to benefit the participants, directly or indirectly?

YES√ NO □

If YES, give details.

No material benefits will be offered to the participants, although, it is hoped that involvement in the research will be enjoyable. Dependent on findings, there is the possibility of improvements being made to the quality of the outdoor provision that may benefit future participants or those who make a return visit.

3.9 Will the true purpose of the research be concealed from the participants?

YES □ **NO √**

If YES, explain what information will be concealed and why. Will participants be debriefed at the conclusion of the study? If not, why not?

3.10 At any stage in this research could researchers' safety be compromised or could the research induce emotional distress in the researchers?

YES □ **NO √**

If YES, to either or both, give details and outline procedures to be out in place to deal with potential problems.

SECTION 4: PARTICIPANTS

4.1 How many participants is it hoped to include in the research?

High level informant interviews	Approx. 32
Questionnaire survey	Approx. 1000
Follow-up interviews	Approx. 15

4.2 What criteria will be used in deciding on the inclusion and exclusion of participants in the study?

The respondents for the high-level interviews will be:

1. Calvert Trust trustees and managers involved in strategic direction but unlikely to be involved in the delivery of the outdoor activities to participants;
2. Calvert Trust instructional staff directly involved in the activity delivery;

3. Representatives of visiting organisations who are involved in the decision to attend the Calvert Trust;
4. Representatives of visiting organisations who lead groups of participants visiting the Centres and participate in the activities;
5. Participants' parents;
6. The participants themselves;
7. A similar sample will be made for the comparative study.

The questionnaire survey will be given to all participants and group leaders attending the Centres over the 4-6 month research period. Completion is voluntary, but this questionnaire will form part of the post-course evaluation system for visitors to the Calvert Trust Centres. All visitors to the Centres attend through a process of self-selection, both in terms of the organisations who choose to visit and the participants that they bring. All evaluation questionnaires returned will be included, if the data are deemed usable and where the responses show evidence that the participant having understood the questions, to the extent of their ability.

The follow-up interviews will be conducted with a cross-section of participants who have completed the evaluation forms. They will be selected to be representative of the clientele of the Centres.

4.3 Are any of the participants likely to:

be under 16 years of age?	**YES** √	NO □
children in the care of a Local Authority?	**YES** √	NO □
known to have special educational needs	**YES** √	NO □
physically or mentally ill?	**YES** √	NO □
vulnerable in other ways	**YES** √	NO □
members of a racial or ethnic minority?	**YES** √	NO □
unlikely to be proficient in English?	**YES** √	NO □
in a client / professional relationship with the researchers?	YES □	**NO** √
in a student-teacher relationship with the researchers?	YES □	**NO** √
in any other dependent relationship with the researchers?	YES □	**NO** √
have difficulty in reading and/or comprehending any printed material distributed as part of the study?	**YES** √	NO □

If YES to any of the above, explain and describe the measures that will be used to protect and/or inform participants.

All participants who are vulnerable or disadvantaged for any of the reasons identified above will be accompanied at all times during the questionnaire completion or interview process by a parents, guardian, teacher or other professional who has responsibility for the care of that individual. This will ensure that the best approach is being used for the individual and that both the questions and the interview process are understood to the best of each individual's capabilities.

No unsupervised access to participants is required by the nature of the research. All of the researchers will have completed CRB / ISA, or equivalent, clearance.

How will the sample be recruited?

100% of returns will be used, if appropriate.

4.5 Will participants receive any financial or other material benefits because of participation?

YES □ **NO √**

If YES, what benefits will be offered to participants and why?

Before completing Sections 5 & 6 please refer to the University Data Protection Policy to ensure that the relevant conditions relating to the processing of personal data under Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 are satisfied. Details are Available at:

http://www.dataprotection.ed.ac.uk/principles.html
http://www.dataprotection.ed.ac.uk/activities/DPPolicyFINAL.htm

SECTION 5: CONFIDENTIALITY AND HANDLING OF DATA

5.1 Will the research require the collection of personal information from e.g. universities, schools, employers, or other agencies about individuals without their direct consent?

YES √ NO □

If YES, state what information will be sought and why written consent for access to this information will not be obtained from the participants themselves.

In previous post-course evaluation research, the Calvert Trust has been unable to relate types of disability to the responses given. Thus for this research it is intended to extract medical information from the information that participants are required to provide before taking part in activities, on a "staff-in-confidence" form. Those completing the forms invariably sign that they are happy for the information to be used for marketing, PR or research purposes. Unfortunately it is noted that many visiting organisations are still using copies of forms supplied before this declaration was added, and in these cases it will be deemed that administrative permission is given by the Calvert Trust to access this information which will be aggregated and not linked to any identifiable individual.

5.2 Will any part of the research involving participants be audio/film/video taped or recorded using any other electronic medium?

YES √ NO □

If YES, what medium is to be used and how will the recordings be used?

Audio tape to record interviews for transcription.

5.3 Who will have access to the raw data?

The interview data will be accessed by the principal researcher, academic supervisory team, and any employed interviewers or transcribers.

The questionnaire data, which will be collected by the Calvert Trust, will be accessed by the researchers for the purpose of the research but these files will also be available to the Calvert Trust and their staff, as required for their work.

5.4 How will the confidentiality of data, including the identity of participants, be ensured?

The questionnaire data collected by the Calvert Trust will be secured in accordance with their policies and their registration under the Data Protection Act.

The interview data from both high-level informants and participants will be held temporarily by the interviewers and permanently by the principal researcher. The data will be secured physically or electronically with password protection.

The identity of high-level informants, visiting organisations or individuals will not be revealed in any report, or to any third party, without express permission.

5.5 Specify where the datafiles/audio/video tapes, etc. will be retained after the study, how long they will be retained and how they will eventually be disposed of.

The completed evaluation questionnaires will be kept on files (paper or electronically) in the administrative offices of the Calvert Trust Centres for five years after which the data will be destroyed as dictated by their policies and procedures. If the data will be destroyed by them within this timescale then the principal researcher will take custody of the data until the end of the five year period.

The interview data will be held by the principal researcher and will be kept for five years, before being erased electronically or destroyed by shredding.

5.6 How do you intend for the results of the research to be used?

The results will be used as part of my PhD studies, and may be used for publication in academic journals. The Calvert Trust may use summaries of the results for fundraising, PR and management purposes and this may include presentation to third parties. The outcomes of the research may be used to alter the direction or focus of the Trust's work.

5.7 Will feedback of findings be given to participants. **YES** √ NO □

If YES, how and when will this feedback be provided?

Feedback of the results will be made available to the participants either through the Calvert Trust web site, by specific request and through publication in academic journals.

SECTION 6: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT

6.1 Will written consent be obtained from participants?

YES √ NO √

If YES, attach a copy of the information sheet and consent forms (covering project details, confidentiality, freedom to withdraw at any stage of the project).

Written consent will be obtained for all interviews with vulnerable people and for all the in-depth interviews, using the attached consent forms.

Consent for participation in the email interviews will be obtained through an electronic covering letter explaining that involvement is voluntary. Participants will be asked to agree to participation by email which will be identified as having originated from them by the personal email address from which it has been returned.

Any person completing the email questionnaire who falls into the vulnerable groups identified above or is otherwise deemed to be vulnerable, will complete the attached consent forms (participant and parent) before participation.

If NO, explain why not.

Specific consent will not be obtained for the questionnaires which form part of the centres evaluation / feedback system, the purpose of which will be printed on the questionnaire. Those with comprehension (intellectual, sensory or language) issues will have the purpose and voluntary nature of the questionnaire explained to them in appropriate language to ensure comprehension. The return of the questionnaire will be deemed to be consent for the purpose of this project.

Administrative consent may be deemed sufficient:

a) for studies where the data collection involves aggregated (not individual) statistical information and where the collection of data presents:
(i) no invasion of privacy;
(ii) no potential social or emotional risks:

b) for studies which focus on the development and evaluation of curriculum materials, resources, guidelines, test items, or programme evaluations rather than the study, observation, and evaluation of individuals.

6.2 Will administrative consent (eg. from a headteacher) be obtained in lieu of participants' consent? YES □ **NO √**

6.3 In the case of minors participating in the research on an individual basis, will the consent or assent of parents be obtained? YES □ **NO √**

If YES, explain how this consent or assent will be obtained.
If NO, give reasons.

Please see above

6.4 Will the consent or assent (at least verbal) of minors participating in the research on an individual basis be obtained?

YES √ NO □

If YES, explain how this consent or assent will be obtained.

Please see above

6.5 In the case of participants whose first language is not English, will arrangements be made to ensure informed consent?

YES √ NO □

If YES, what arrangements will be made?

Please see above

6.6 In the case of participants with special educational needs will arrangements be made to ensure informed consent?

YES √ NO □

If YES, what arrangements will be made?

Please see above

SECTION 7: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The University has a draft 'Policy on the Conflict of Interest' (copies available from the Research Support Office). Regarding research the draft states that a conflict of interest would arise in cases where an employee of the University might be

> " compromising research objectivity or independence in return for financial or non-financial benefit for him/herself or for a relative or friend."

The draft policy also states that the responsibility for avoiding a conflict of interest, in the first instance, lies with the individual, but that potential conflicts of interest should always be disclosed, normally to the line manager or Head of Department. Failure to disclose a conflict of interest or to cease involvement until the conflict has been resolved may result in disciplinary action and in serious cases could result in dismissal.

7.1 Does your research involve a conflict of interest as outlined above

YES √ NO □

If YES, give details.

I previously worked for the Calvert Trust for 17 years, my PhD is sponsored by them and funded by one of their major benefactors, Zurich Community Trust. The Calvert Trust has an interest in the results as positive findings have the potential to increase revenue to the Charity by providing supporting material for both its fundraising and marketing functions.

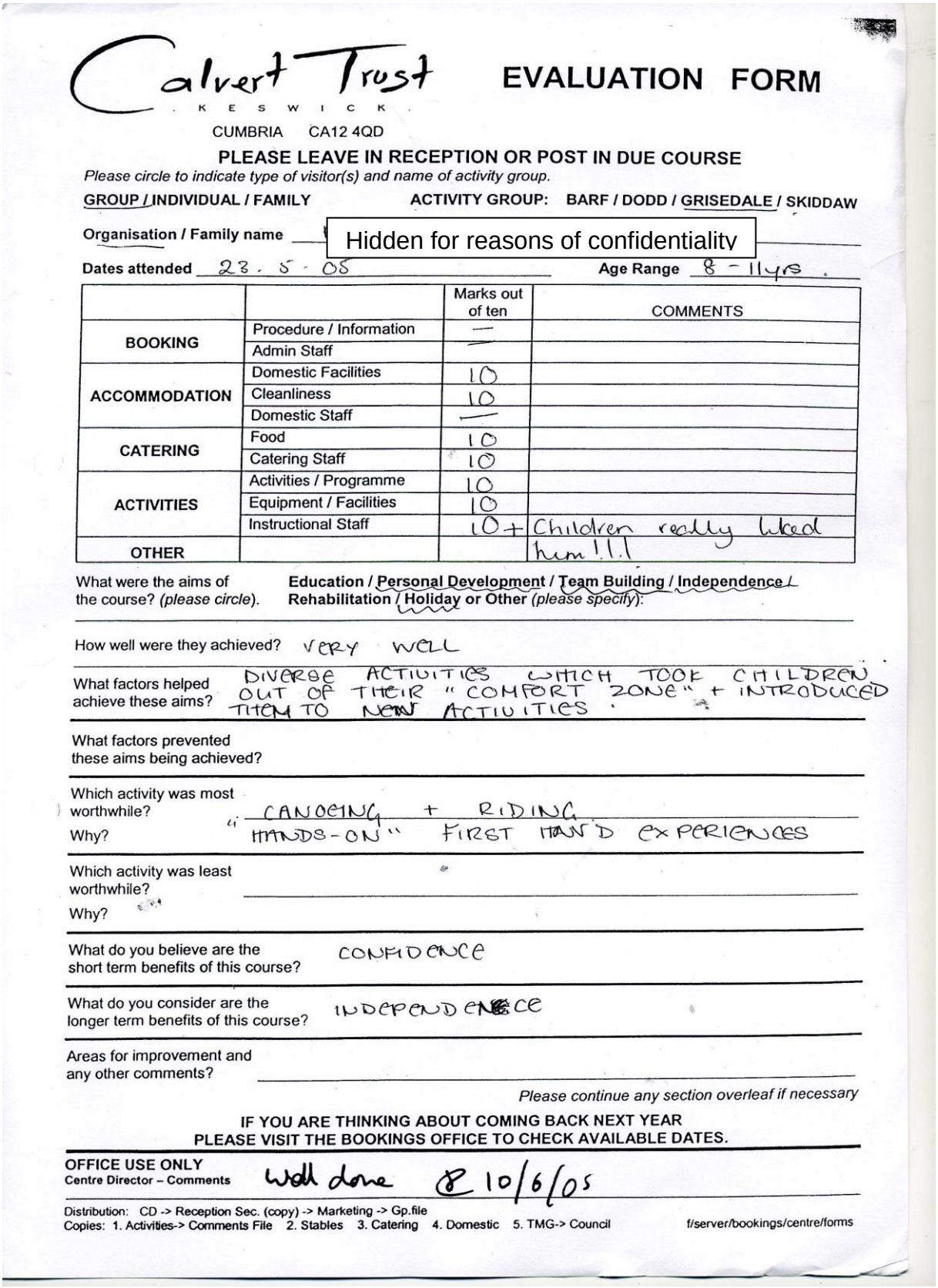
All parties (Zurich Community Trust, Calvert Trust, the PhD supervisors and myself) are fully aware of this potential conflict of interest and are committed to carrying out this research in a sensitive but objective manner. Negative findings will be of value to both Zurich and Calvert as this will influence future strategy of the organisations and potentially modify their funding requirements.

N.B. Have you included copies of participants information sheet(s) and consent sheet(s) if appropriate?

Please take time to check through your application to ensure that you have answered all relevant questions.

Electronically completed forms should be submitted to Sandra.Orr@ed.ac.uk
Research Support Office, Old Moray House, School of Education

Appendix A.5.1: Phase 1 - Visiting leader evaluation



Calvert Trust
KESWICK
CUMBRIA CA12 4QD

EVALUATION FORM

PLEASE LEAVE IN RECEPTION OR POST IN DUE COURSE

Please circle to indicate type of visitor(s) and name of activity group.

GROUP / INDIVIDUAL / FAMILY **ACTIVITY GROUP: BARF / DODD / GRISEDALE / SKIDDAW**

Organisation / Family name Hidden for reasons of confidentiality

Dates attended 23.5.05 **Age Range** 8 - 11yrs

		Marks out of ten	COMMENTS
BOOKING	Procedure / Information	—	
	Admin Staff	—	
ACCOMMODATION	Domestic Facilities	10	
	Cleanliness	10	
	Domestic Staff	—	
CATERING	Food	10	
	Catering Staff	10	
ACTIVITIES	Activities / Programme	10	
	Equipment / Facilities	10	
	Instructional Staff	10+	Children really liked him!!!
OTHER			

What were the aims of the course? *(please circle)*. **Education / Personal Development / Team Building / Independence / Rehabilitation / Holiday or Other** *(please specify)*:

How well were they achieved? VERY WELL

What factors helped achieve these aims? DIVERSE ACTIVITIES WHICH TOOK CHILDREN OUT OF THEIR "COMFORT ZONE" + INTRODUCED THEM TO NEW ACTIVITIES.

What factors prevented these aims being achieved?

Which activity was most worthwhile? CANOEING + RIDING

Why? "HANDS-ON" FIRST HAND EXPERIENCES

Which activity was least worthwhile?

Why?

What do you believe are the short term benefits of this course? CONFIDENCE

What do you consider are the longer term benefits of this course? INDEPENDENCE

Areas for improvement and any other comments?

Please continue any section overleaf if necessary

IF YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT COMING BACK NEXT YEAR PLEASE VISIT THE BOOKINGS OFFICE TO CHECK AVAILABLE DATES.

OFFICE USE ONLY
Centre Director – Comments Well done 8 10/6/05

Distribution: CD -> Reception Sec. (copy) -> Marketing -> Gp.file
Copies: 1. Activities-> Comments File 2. Stables 3. Catering 4. Domestic 5. TMG-> Council f/server/bookings/centre/forms

Appendix A.5.2: Phase 1 - Instructor post course report

STAFF - IN - CONFIDENCE

'D FORM **COURSE REPORT** Ref: 21/05 MW,

NAME: [redacted]

GROUP: ~~BARF~~ / DODD / ~~GRISEDALE / SKIDDAW / HELVELLYN~~

DATE OF COURSE: [redacted]

GROUP SIZE: 11. AGE RANGE: 12 - 9 years old.

HELPERS: M 0. F 3. GROUP: M 6. F 2.

NATURE OF DISABILITIES: Cerebal palsy, Asthma, Epilepsy, hemi-plegdia,

WHEELCHAIRS: NUMBER: 1 occasional. TYPE: Manual.

GENERAL MOBILITY: Good to very good - all keen to help with chair!

D2 GROUP DYNAMICS

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF COURSE (When possible these to be discussed with visiting staff prior to commencement of activities) :

Fun + teamwork.

ATTITUDES :

keen, helpful, super-well behaved kids.

INSTRUCTOR GENERAL ASSESMENT OF WEEK :

The week went from good to excellent.

D3 DOMESTIC NEEDS

None.
Early tuck shop.

STAFF -IN -CONFIDENCE

D5 DAILY DETAILS: Weather/Activities/location/Gadets/Highs & Lows/Other Comments.

DAY 1	Arrival + lunch. Afternoon: Walk to Mirehouse + play on Squirrel Island swings / walk around grounds Evening: Swing in Sports hall. Inspired independence (deciding height) and teamwork (pulling each other up).
DAY 2	AM = Cloudy but dry. Mirehouse assault courses. Relay races, carry bucket of water / blindfolds. Teambuilding high point: Didn't spill any water. P.M. = Climbing at Sandale. All climbed on easy terrain. Some climbing on steep rock. All fully independant + Confident. X2 on overhanging Abseil! An excellent day. Little behavioural difficulties.
DAY 3	A.M. = Problem solving: Towers with Lights, Islands + planks, Communication games. Plenty of review. Group responded well to reviews. Some confrontation to team building, but behaviour reviewed. P.M. = Sailing + Open boat (Single). Much fun + idependence - worked on jobs in boat eg. handling jib sheets e.t.c. Team building good = helped clear away.
DAY 4	A.M. Horse riding enjoyable. P.M. Orienteering. Much independence unaccompanied at cat stocks + all controls found. An excellent finish.
DAY 5	Trip to Whinlatter to see ospreys + handout certificates. Early departure (11:30).
DAY 6	
DAY 7	
	TIME OF DEPARTURE

DGEY DO'S : _____

DEVELOPMENTS: Staff: ☐ bit more organised at start of sailing.

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS : ☐

OUP INSTRUCTOR ☐ **DATE:** 6th June, 2003.

vity\Forms\DFORM

Appendix A.6.1: Phase 2 - Visiting leader evaluation

Group Leader's Evaluation

Visit Dates: _____

Organisation / Family Name: _____

Name of person completing form: _____

Activity Group: _____

Please indicate, in order of importance, the purpose(s) of your visit with 1 being the most important

Education	Personal social skills	Team interaction	Independence
General personal development	The chance to take part in activities	Holiday/Fun	Respite
Other:			

Were all your aims met?	Yes	Partly	No

Please could you explain what assisted / prevented your aims being met?

Do you carry out any of your own evaluation or follow up to your visit?	Yes	No

What was the most worthwhile thing you did at the centre?

Please could you explain why this was the case?

What was the least worthwhile thing you did at the centre?

Please could you explain why this was the case?

Were there any notable events that occurred whilst you were at the centre or concerning the visit as a whole that were of particular benefit, interest or inspirational?

While you were at the centre did you find that:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No real feeling	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The activity equipment / facilities were suitable					
The activity programme was appropriate					
The evening activities were appropriate					
The activities were challenging					
The instructors were professional and friendly					

Please make any further comment on the activities or the above?

The accommodation facilities were suitable					
The accommodation was clean					
The accommodation was comfortable					
The domestic staff were helpful & friendly					
The food was enjoyable					
The catering staff were helpful & friendly					
The booking procedure was efficient					
We were made to feel welcome on arrival					
The reception/office staff were helpful & friendly					

Please make any further comment on the centre or the above?

Do you have anything else you would like to comment on?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.
Please post or return it to reception

Office use:

Appendix A.6.2: Phase 2 - Participant evaluation

Participant's Evaluation

Visit Dates: _____ **Room No:** _____

Your name or the name of your Organisation/Family:

_____

If it is easier, please use this form for the group. It would help if you could indicate the number of group members for whom each comment applies.

Whist at the centre would you say that;

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No real feeling	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Question not relevant
You found the activities challenging						
You did things you did not think were possible						
You can do more things by yourself						
The above will be of benefit when you get home						
You feel better about yourself						
You are more aware of the needs of others						
You have improved your communication skills						
You enjoyed your visit						

What was the most worthwhile thing you did at the centre?

Why was this?

What was the least worthwhile thing you did at the centre?

Why was this?

What do you think was the main benefit of your visit to the centre?
(please number those that apply with 1 being the most important)

Education	Personal social skills	Team interaction	Independence
General personal development	The chance to take part in activities	Holiday / Fun	Respite
Other: (please identify)			

PTO

While you were at Calvert did you find that:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No real feeling	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Your bedroom was clean					
Your bedroom was comfortable					
You enjoyed the food					
The domestic staff were helpful and friendly					
The catering staff were helpful and friendly					
The instructors were helpful and friendly					
You were made to feel welcome on arrival					
The evening activities were good					

Do you have any other comments?

I have a - Physical Disability		Others have difficulty with my Behaviour	
I have a - Sensory Disability		I do not have a disability	
I have a - Learning Disability		I do not wish to comment	

This form was filled in by	- the participant	
I was helped to complete this form by	- a member of Calvert Trust staff	
	- a carer / group leader	
	- a family member	
	number of participants using this form (if more than one)	

Once you have completed this form, please return it to a member of staff or reception.
Thank you for your time and assistance in helping us to improve what we do

Appendix A.7.1: Phase 3 - Information letter

University of Edinburgh
Moray House School of Education
Simon Laurie House, Holyrood Road
Edinburgh EH8 8AQ
Tel: 017687 73040
email: john.crosbie@ed.ac.uk
date

Research into outdoor activities for people with disabilities

Due to your particular experience or expertise, I am hoping you would be prepared to participate in a research project into outdoor activities for people with disabilities, with particular reference to the work of the Calvert Trust.

This project aims to develop:

1. a greater understanding of the impact that outdoor education may have on the lives of people with disabilities; and, in the event of any impact being identified;
2. an understanding of the activities or process that may bring about that change.

This project is being conducted as part of my PhD studies in the School of Education at the University of Edinburgh and I may be assisted in the data collection by other researchers.

The research will involve an interview conducted in writing by email involving the 8 questions below which will be seeking your opinion on various aspects of the use of the outdoors for people with disabilities. Follow up questions may be required to ensure that your answers have been fully understood by the researchers in the context of this investigation.

Participation is entirely voluntary and you will retain the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without being required to give any explanation of your reasons. Although I will be aware of your identity, there will be systems in place to preserve confidentiality of respondents. Access to your responses will be restricted to myself, my academic supervisors (Professor Pete Higgins and Professor Jennifer Wishart) along with any other researchers associated with the data collection. We are all bound by a code of conduct not to reveal personal information. In any report, write up or papers published, individuals will not be identified, although anonymous quotes may be used to add colour. A generic description of the circumstances from which you are commenting may be required to make sense of, or add context to, your responses. In the unlikely event that a disclosure will occur that would be of concern to the authorities, then there is an obligation to inform them.

The results of the research will be made available to you on request, or via the Calvert Trust web site, when the research is complete. They may also be available via academic journals once published.

If you have any queries or further questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above. If you have any concerns regarding the content of the questions, or should you have any complaints regarding the conduct of the research, please feel free to contact:

Professor Lyn Tett
Director of Research, Moray House School of Education
University of Edinburgh, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AQ
Tel:0130 651 6113
Lyn.Tett@ed.ac.uk

Professor Tett is responsible for the conduct of all research carried out under the auspices of the School of Education at the University of Edinburgh and is independent of this research.

I do hope that you will be able to assist in this project. I would be grateful if you could let me know, either way, within the next two weeks, either by email letting me know you are unable to participate, or when you may be able to answer the questions, or by completion of the consent form and questions.

Many thanks.

Yours,

John Crosbie

John Crosbie
PhD Researcher (Outdoor Education)

Appendix A.7.2: Phase 3 - Consent form

CONSENT FORM

(this consent form is included in the email and is most easily returned by replying to the email and completing the required fields)

I understand participation is completely voluntary and I agree to participate in this interview relating to the above research.

YES / NO (please delete as necessary)

I have been provided with details of the research in a separate letter which provides adequate information regarding this research and I have been given the opportunity to ask for further details if I required.

YES / NO

I am happy for anything I say to be quoted (anonymously) in research reports or publications.

YES / NO

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

In the event of the respondent being unable to access the information, this must be completed by another person who had explained the content to the respondent.

I have explained the contents of the attached letter to

.....
(name)

and consider that they have understood the information sufficiently to enable them to make a decision as to whether or not they wish to participate in this research.

Name: .....

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Appendix A.7.3: Phase 3 – Interview questions

QUESTIONS

(these questions are included in the email and you may find it easiest to answer them by replying to the email and putting your answers in the required fields. If you prefer to answer them here in word and then attach them to the email, that is also acceptable)

1. a. Do you consider there are any benefits from participating in outdoor adventurous activities for people with disabilities? YES / NO
   b. If "yes", please can you list what you consider to be the MAIN benefits, putting them in rank order with the first being the most important? (Please be as precise as you can rather than use a general term such as "personal development")
   c. If "no", please can you identify any activities for people with disabilities that may have benefits for them and what those benefits are?

2. How would you establish whether any of the benefits identified above are being achieved?

3. a. Do you consider that people with a certain disability derive specific benefits from the activities? YES / NO / DON'T KNOW
   b. If "yes" please identify the benefit(s) and the disability group(s)?
   c. If "no" please explain why not?

4. a. Can you identify any detrimental, or potentially detrimental, aspects of participation in outdoor adventurous activities for people with disabilities (discounting physical harm)? YES / NO
   b. If "yes", please identify these?

5. a. Do you consider that some adventurous outdoor activities are especially good at delivering the benefits identified in question 1.b. above? YES / NO / DON'T KNOW
   b. If "yes", please will you identify the activity and the specific benefit(s) it delivers?
   c. If "no", please will you identify any training or other activity that delivers those benefits?
   d. If "don't know" who do you consider would be in the best position to answer this type of question?

6. a. Do you consider there are specific attributes of any activities identified in 5 above that help the participant gain the identified benefits? YES / NO / DON'T KNOW
   b. If "yes", please will you identify the attribute and the benefit(s) it delivers?
   c. If "no", please will you identify anything that you consider may contribute to someone obtaining the benefit?
   d. If "don't know" who do you consider would be in the best position to answer this type of question?

7. a. What do you consider you (or someone else) can do as a facilitator to help an individual to maximise any benefit from the activities.
   b. Why do you think this would work?

8. a. Do you consider that obtaining the above benefits may make a long-lasting difference to the lives of individuals with disabilities? YES / NO / DON'T KNOW
   b. If "yes", please will you describe these differences?
   c. If "no", what do you consider would make the greatest lasting difference to the lives of individuals with disabilities (discounting the removal of their disability)?
   d. If "don't know" who do you consider would be in the best position to answer this type of question?

Appendix A.7.4: Phase 3 – Sample email interview

QUESTIONS

(these questions are included in the email and you may find it easiest to answer them by replying to the email and putting your answers in the required fields. If you prefer to answer them here in word and then attach them to the email, that is also acceptable)

1. ***Benefits of participation in activities***

   a. *Do you consider there are any benefits from participating in outdoor adventurous activities for people with disabilities?*

YES

   b. *If "yes", please can you list what you consider to be the MAIN benefits, putting them in rank order with the first being the most important? (Please be as precise as you can rather than use a general term such as "personal development")*

1. Developing confidence and self esteem and as a result -
2. Making decisions re personal conduct rather than waiting for instructions.
This will be important in getting a job, but more importantly when parents have left the scene either through death or being unable to cope in later life.
Breaking close ties with parents for those with learning difficulties can be extremely painful and guilt ridden.
3. Bonding with strangers to form a team.
4. Helping others where possible. To bring the realisation that own difficulties can sometimes be set aside in order to improve the life of others.

   c. *If "no", please can you identify any activities for people with disabilities that may have benefits for them and what those benefits are?*

2. ***Establishing whether the benefits are being achieved***

   a. *How would you establish whether any of the benefits identified above are being achieved?*

Monitoring progress over the week and, in our case, over the years. Obtaining feedback for parents/carers and the holidaymakers themselves.

3. ***Benefit by disability***

   a. *Do you consider that different disability groups derive different benefits from the activities?*

NO

   b. *If "yes" please identify the benefit(s) and the disability group(s)?*

   c. *If "no" please explain why not?*

Some of our folk achieve great success because of good physical abilities and thrive on the consequent success with little apparent effort. Others struggle because of reduced physical ability and other handicaps. Their achievements are obtained by great determination and struggle in many cases. The bottom line for all is that they are increasing their self-esteem - some spectacularly others slowly. In some 500 client visits with our group I recall only three who did not benefit from the experience and who I would not take again. Intransigence was at the root for all three.

4. ***Detrimental effects***

   a. *Can you identify any detrimental, or potentially detrimental, aspects of participation in outdoor adventurous activities for people with disabilities (discounting physical harm)?*

NO Not detrimental, more negative. See 3 above.

   b. If "yes", please identify these?

5. Activities that deliver the benefits

a. *Do you consider that some adventurous outdoor activities are especially good at delivering the benefits identified in question 1.b. above?*

YES When working as a team.
Having come directly from all sorts of backgrounds - hospital, care home, parental home we have four meetings over a 6 month period before the holiday. Our aim is to take away not a group of strangers, but a group of friends. Practice runs such as 'Go to your holiday group with your support workers' or 'Join your holiday room mates' are well established by the time of the holiday. This knocks on well when holidaymakers are working as a team e.g. when Canadian canoes are lashed together with team leaders (our staff or CT staff) encouraging co-operation across the 'vessel' and engendering competitiveness against other crews. Similarly, as a group on a long fell walk where it is noticeable that the walking group tend to get drift together in the evening in a feeling of togetherness having all experienced rain/cold/heat/fatigue and the excitement of 'conquering' a fell. Having been together all day I sense a great feeling of friendship and equality. Personally, I always have those feelings concluding that we are all mates - and that if there is anything it is that I alone can read a map.

b. *If "yes", please will you identify the activity and the specific benefit(s) it delivers?*

See previous and 6 below

c. *If "no", please will you identify any training or other activity that delivers those benefits?*

d. *If "don't know" who do you consider would be in the best position to answer this type of question?*

6. Attributes of activities that deliver the benefits

a. *Do you consider there are specific attributes of any activities identified in 5 above that help the participant gain the identified benefits?*

YES and NO
Canoeing and fell walking are covered in 5.
Horse riding and rock climbing I consider to be individual and subjective as regards benefits albeit challenging and good for self esteem in nearly all cases if tailored to individuals. I do not like to see holidaymakers set tasks beyond their individual abilities. Sailing for our folk is all rather static. To be enjoyed as a purely recreational break. Orienteering is usually difficult relying on support team navigation.

b. *If "yes", please will you identify the attribute and the benefit(s) it delivers?*

c. *If "no", please will you identify anything that you consider may contribute to someone obtaining the benefit?*

d. *If "don't know" who do you consider would be in the best position to answer this type of question?*

7. Role of facilitator

a. *What do you consider you (or someone else) can do as a facilitator to help an individual to maximise any benefit from the activities.*

We make careful assessments of individuals before we consider them suitable for the holiday taking in to account the aspirations and views of individual holidaymakers and input from parents and carers. When on holiday, if a holidaymaker appears to be having difficulty with a particular activity we seek the help of CT instructors who have probably met such problems with other groups'

You consistently state that you consider the benefits are "Developing confidence and self esteem".

Do you (or CT staff) do anything to help an individual develop this confidence and self esteem?

Details of the journey with refreshments, comfort breaks and their immediate regime on arrival at CT are all given beforehand. On departure day it is hoped that holidaymakers will arrive and follow these procedures making their own decisions. Parents and carers are encouraged to allow their charges to do everything on their own – but with discreet observation and supervision. All these arrangements before the holiday allow holidaymakers to 'own' their holiday and be responsible for it.

If the latter, what is it about the activities that you consider helps develop this?

The activities provide personal challenges in rock climbing and horse riding and exercises in teamwork as regards canoeing and fell walking. Emphasis is placed on helping each other and all are encouraged to strive for their best, but at their own discretion.

a. *Why do you think this would work?*

It does! We have organised over 18 holidays at CT and have gradually refined our approach with many modifications on the way.

8. *Long-term effect*

a. *Do you consider that obtaining the above benefits may make a long lasting difference to the lives of individuals with disabilities?*

YES

b. *If "yes", please will you describe these differences?*

Most definitely along lasting benefit. As I said, we see changes during the week in most cases and, for those coming over a number of years, an increasing improvement in self-esteem and confidence. Again, feedback from parents/carers is sought and returns are always positive with some parents/carers feeling that the holiday is essential for their charge. Holidaymakers too report of their enjoyment and of the holiday format and its benefits to them. Some train for the next holiday be it by running or just slimming in order to improve performance and increase enjoyment!

Could you please describe what difference having an improved self-esteem and confidence makes to the lives of the individuals you work with?

One day, parents will no longer be around or be unable to care for their children. Their children may be admitted to a care home or a supported living establishment or even their own flat etc. Those in care homes may be encouraged to go to supported living accommodation or flats later in life. In such accommodation they may live with others and need to work together and make their own decisions. Coping for themselves is, therefore, a huge challenge and we hope that our weeks at CT are helping individuals to stand on their own feet to a much greater extent than can be achieved by the usual social training methods.

c. *If "no", what do you consider would make the greatest lasting difference to the lives of individuals with disabilities (discounting the removal of their disability)?*

d. *If "don't know" who do you consider would be in the best position to answer this type of question?*

Appendix A.8.1: Phase 4 – Participant selection matrix

OVERALL CUSTOMER PROFILE					
Female	33%	Male	66%		
Adult	37%	Child	63%		
Organisation	66%	Family/Ind.	33%		
Single visit	N/A	Multi-visit	N/A		
Congenital	80%	Acquired	20%		
Physical	35%	Intellectual	53%	Sensory	8%
Education	N/A	Recreation	N/A	Rehab.	N/A
Lakes	35%	Kielder	38%	Exmoor	26%

PLANNED SAMPLE					
Female	12	Male	12		
Adult	12	Child	12		
Organisation	16	Family/Ind.	8		
Single visit	12	Multi-visit	12		
Congenital	16	Acquired	8		
Physical	10	Intellectual	12	Sensory	2
Education	8	Recreation	8	Rehab.	8
Lakes	8	Kielder	8	Exmoor	8

ACTUAL SAMPLE					
Female	11	Male	12		
Adult	14	Child	9		
Organisation	17	Family/Ind.	6		
Single visit	7	Multi-visit	16		
Congenital	17	Acquired	6		
Physical	10	Intellectual	10	Sensory	3
Education	8	Recreation	7	Rehab.	8
Lakes	9	Kielder	6	Exmoor	8

Lake District				Kielder				Exmoor			
Physical Disability		Intellectual Disability		Physical Disability		Intellectual Disability		Physical Disability		Intellectual Disability	
Congenital	Acquired	Congenital	Acquired	Congenital	Acquired	Congenital	Acquired	Congenital	Acquired	Congenital	Acquired
		"O" Male Multi-visit Adult Recreation		"I" Female Multi-visit Child Education						"G" Female Single-visit Child Education	
Male Single-visit Child Education		"R" Male Multi-visit Adult Recreation		"J" Male Multi-visit Child Education					Female Single-visit Adult Rehab.	"D" Male Multi-visit Child Education	
Female Single-visit Child Education		"V" Male Multi-visit Adult Rehab.		"K" Male Multi-visit Child Education					"A" Female Single-visit Adult Rehab.	"E" Female Multi-visit Child Education	
"T" Male Multi-visit Adult Recreation		"W" Female Single-visit Adult Rehab.		"L" Female Multi-visit Adult Recreation					"B" Male Single-visit Adult Rehab.	"F" Female Single-visit Child Education	
"Q" Male Multi-visit Adult Recreation	"S" Female Multi-visit Adult Rehab.	"U" Female Multi-visit Adult Rehab.	"P" Male Multi-visit Adult Recreation	"M" Female Multi-visit Adult Recreation	Male Single-visit Child DNA	Female Single-visit Child Education	"N" Female Multi-visit Adult Recreation		"C" Male Single-visit Child Rehab.	"H" Male Single-visit Child Education	

KEY: Did not take part in planned interviews — Substitute interview for those who did not take part

Appendices

Appendix A.8.2: Phase 4 - Information letter

University of Edinburgh
Moray House School of Education
Simon Laurie House, Holyrood Road
Edinburgh EH8 8AQ
Tel: 017687 73040
email: john.crosbie@ed.ac.uk
Date:

Greetings

Research into Outdoor Activities For People With Disabilities

Due to your son/daughter/ward recently having visited the Calvert Trust Outdoor Centre, I am hoping you would be prepared to give permission for them to participate in a research project into outdoor activities for people with disabilities.

This project aims to develop:

1. a greater understanding of the impact that outdoor education may have on the lives of people with disabilities; and in the event of any impact being identified;
2. an understanding of the activities or process that may bring about that change.

This project is being conducted as part of my PhD studies in the School of Education at the University of Edinburgh.

Participation is entirely voluntary and both you and your son/daughter/ward will retain the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without being required to give any explanation of your reasons. Although I will be aware of the identity of your son/daughter/ward, there will be systems in place to preserve confidentiality of respondents. Access to responses will be restricted to myself, my academic supervisors (Professor Pete Higgins and Professor Jennifer Wishart). We are all bound by a code of conduct not to reveal personal information. In any report, write up or papers published, individuals will not be identified, although anonymous quotes may be used to add colour and a generic description of the circumstances from which you are commenting may be required to make sense of, or add context to, your responses. In the unlikely event that during an interview something is disclosed that would be of concern to the authorities, then there is an obligation to inform them.

The results of the research will be made available to you on request, or via the Calvert Trust web site, when the research is complete. They may also be available via academic journals once published.

The research will involve an interview that will take approximately 30 minutes about their visit to the Calvert Trust and their experiences there. These interviews will be done at a place convenient to yourself and will be face-to-face. Your son / daughter / ward will be accompanied at all times during the interview and, if required, supported by yourself or a member of staff. You will also be empowered to terminate the interview if considered in the best interests of your son/daughter/ward.

If you have any queries or further questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above. If you have any concerns regarding the content of the questions, or should you have any complaints regarding the conduct of the research, please feel free to contact:

Professor Lyn Tett
Director of Research, Moray House School of Education
University of Edinburgh, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AQ
Tel:0130 651 6113
Lyn.Tett@ed.ac.uk

Professor Tett is responsible for the conduct of all research carried out under the auspices of the School of Education at the University of Edinburgh and is independent of this research.

I do hope that both you and your son/daughter/ward will be able to assist in this project. I would be grateful if you could let me know, either way, within the next two weeks. If you are willing to participate please will you complete the attached consent form and provide contact details so the interview may be arranged.

Many thanks.

Yours,

John Crosbie
PhD Researcher (Outdoor Education)

Appendix A.8.3: Phase 4 - Consent form

CONSENT FORM

I AGREE / DO NOT AGREE for my SON / DAUGHTER / WARD
(please delete as necessary) (please delete as necessary)

.....
(Name of son/daughter/ward)
to participate in an interview relating to the above research.
I have been provided with adequate information for my needs regarding this research and acknowledge that the interview may be recorded.

Signed: .....

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Post Code: .....

Relation to participant: .....

Phone No.: .....

Email .....

Please indicate your preferred method of contact to discuss arrangements for the interview.

Appendix A.8.4: Phase 4 - Information letter

University of Edinburgh
Moray House School of Education
Simon Laurie House, Holyrood Road
Edinburgh EH8 8AQ
Tel: 017687 73040
email: john.crosbie@ed.ac.uk

Research into outdoor activities for people with disabilities

Thank you for taking part in the interview which is part of my PhD studies in the School of Education at the University of Edinburgh.

As I explained before we started:

1. This project aims to develop a greater understanding of how outdoor education experiences may impact on the lives of people with disabilities.
2. Participation was entirely voluntary and you retained the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without being required to give any explanation of your reasons, and could withdraw any comment made during the interview.
3. Although I will be aware of your identity, there are systems in place to preserve confidentiality of respondents. Access to your responses will be restricted to myself and my academic supervisors (Professor Pete Higgins and Professor Jennifer Wishart). We are all bound by a code of conduct not to reveal personal information. In any report, write up or papers published, individuals will not be identified. However, anonymous quotes may be used to add colour or a generic description of the circumstances from which you are commenting used to make sense of, or add context to, your responses.
4. In the unlikely event that something having been disclosed that would be of concern to the authorities, then there is an obligation to inform them.

The results of the research will be made available to you on request, or via the Calvert Trust web site, when the research is complete. They may also be available via academic journals once published.

If you have any queries or further questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above. If you have any concerns regarding the content of the questions, or have any complaints regarding the conduct of the research, please feel free to contact:

Professor Lyn Tett
Director of Research, Moray House School of Education
University of Edinburgh, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AQ
Tel:0130 651 6113
Lyn.Tett@ed.ac.uk

Professor Tett is responsible for the conduct of all research carried out under the auspices of the School of Education at the University of Edinburgh and is independent of this research.

Thank you once more for assisting in this project.

Yours,

John Crosbie
PhD Researcher (Outdoor Education)

Appendix A.8.5: Phase 4 - Participant questions

Read to respondents

0. Questions

a. Sub questions

Participant answers

Directions to self

Prompts

Notes

NAME:		
CENTRE:		
PD	/	II
CON	/	ACQ
> 18	/	U 18
Ref:		B/DM550

Interview protocol
Participants' Experiences
of Outdoor Centres

I am doing some research into outdoor activities centres. You have been selected for this interview because I believe you have recently visited an outdoor centre.

Is this correct?

I would be grateful if you could help by answering some question about your visit. This should take between 30 to 40 minutes.

Are you OK with this?

Please try to answer each question as fully as possible as I would really value hearing your opinions.

Before we start there are a few things I should like to make you aware of:

1. If you would rather not answer a question, then please just say so.
2. You are free to change your mind or withdraw what you say at any point during the interview or immediately afterwards.
3. Your answers and identity are confidential. I will not discuss what you say with the staff at the Centre or anyone you may have gone with, and you will not be named in any written report.

Are you happy to continue?

Both the above and the following questions will act as an ice-breaker, a settler, confirm some of the selection criteria and help gauge the intellectual capability of the respondent. The latter will assist in deciding whether the questions require modification during the interview or identifying whether help in communication is needed.

1. **Which outdoor centre did you visit recently?**
2. **Roughly how long ago was this?**
3. **What was the weather like?**
4. **Who did you go with?**

Was this with your school, a club, your family or by yourself?

a. If **"by myself":** Was this with a personal care assistant or buddy?

5. **Was this your first visit to an outdoor centre?**

a. If **"no":** Which Centres have you visited and roughly how many times (and over how many years / or how long ago was this)?

6. **How long did you stay** (during the most recent visit only)?

7. Did you choose (want) to go to an outdoor centre?

a. **If "Yes":** Why was this?

b. **Was the trip part of an organised trip or event,** for example part of a (school or other) organised group or was it a holiday / to take part in the activities / or for some other reason?.

c. **If an organised trip:** What was the purpose of the trip?

d. **If a "holiday":** Was it your choice where to go or someone else's?

e. **If it was "someone else":** Who made this decision?

8. What did you hope (or expect) to get out of this visit?

Explore each expectation with all or some of the following questions

a. Did it turn out this way?

b. In what way / how / please expand (if appropriate) ?

c. Was there anything that helped you to (repeat stated expectation) out of the visit?

9. Was there anything else you hoped to get from the visit?

a. Did it turn out this way?

b. In what way / how / please expand (if appropriate)?

c. Was there anything that helped you to (repeat stated expectation) out of the visit?

If it was part of an organised trip:

10. What do you think the organiser hoped you would get out of it?

Explore each expectation with the following questions

a. Did it turn out this way?

b. In what way / how / please expand (if appropriate)?

c. Was there anything that helped you to (repeat stated expectation) out of the visit?

11. Do you think there was anything else the (name of organiser) hoped for?

a. Did it turn out this way?

b. In what way / how / please expand (if appropriate)?

c. Was there anything that helped the organiser to (repeat stated expectation) out of the visit?

12. Was there anything particularly good about your visit?

If poor response try: *What was the best part of your visit? Or What did you like best during your visit?*

13. Was there anything particularly bad about your visit?

If poor response try: *What was the worst part of your visit*? Or: *Was there anything you did not like? (if so, what?)*

I am now going to ask you some questions about the activities at (name of Centre).

14. What did you do when you were at (name of centre) ?

If inappropriate answer, consider asking which activities they did.

Have available the lists of activities offered by each centre from the web site and consider reading the appropriate list as a prompt to them. Also consider including activities not offered by the Centres to check for "default acquiescence".

15. What did you learn / gain from doing the activities?

If only "fun" ask if they got anything other than "fun" from the activities.

a. In what way / how / please expand?

b. Which activities made you (whatever mentioned above)?

c. What was it about the activities that gave you (the feeling of) (whatever mentioned above)?

d. Was there anything that especially made (helped) you feel (whatever mentioned above)?

Follow this line of questioning for each initial response given / gain from the activities.

e. **If "nothing" or similar:** Please tell me what you thought about the activities?

16. Did the instructors help you to learn or gain anything from the activities?

a. **If "yes":** Please can you describe what they did?

b. **If "no":** What role did the instructors play?

c. Would you have liked the instructors to have done anything different to that which you have just described?

17. Do you think taking part in outdoor activities will make any difference to your life?

a. **If "yes":** Please will you describe what difference it will make?

Ask them to consider longer-term or lasting differences if very short-term benefits are identified.

If "no or yes":

Is there anything you are (if yes already) using in your life today that you learned on your course?

18. Did you think were any negative outcomes (effects) from (anything bad about) taking part?

a. **If "yes":** Please describe what these were?

Identify cause and activity

b. Are there any activities that you wouldn't like to repeat (and why)?

c. **If "no":** Where there any activities or experiences from the visit that you would not like to repeat (and why)?

19. Do you have any further comments that you would like to make about the activities at (name of Centre)?

Now moving away from the activities

20. Was there anything about being in (name of Centre), that added to, or detracted (took away) from, what you got out of your visit?

(eg being away from home, living with different people or eating different food)

a. **If "yes":** Please could you describe what added to or took away from your visit?

b. **If "No": go to sub question "20 c".**

c. Would you have preferred to do the activities from home, or have stayed elsewhere for the activities? If so, explore further: e.g. where would you have preferred to stay and why this would be better?

21. Is there anything else you would like to say in general about your stay at (name of centre)?

22. Have you learnt anything about yourself from your visit?

a. **If "yes": What was this? (get to expand if needed)**

b. Has this changed anything you may do in the future, of so what?

23. Have you learnt anything about other people from your visit?

a. **If "yes": What was this? (get to expand if needed)**

b. Has this changed anything you may do in the future, of so what?

24. Have you learnt anything about the outdoor environment from your visit?

a. **If "yes": What was this? (get to expand if needed)**

b. Has this changed anything you may do in the future, of so what?

25. (If the answer to Q3 was that they have visited other outdoor Centres): Earlier you said that you had visited other outdoor Centre(s).

a. Can you please compare what you learnt or gained from your visit to (name of other centre) vs. (name of centre in this interview)?

b. Were there any differences in the approach between the staff at the different centre(s)?

c. How did you feel about going back to an outdoor activity Centre again? before / during / after?

d. Did going back again make a difference to what you gained from your visit this time?

If more than one previous visit:

e. Was this true for each additional visits, if so, how?

26. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experience of visiting outdoor centres?

I have finished asking about your experience but may I ask you a few questions about yourself, if you are happy to answer these:

27. Do you regard yourself as having a disability?

a. **If "yes":** How would you describe your disability?

28. How long have you had this disability for?

29. What is your Occupation? (What do you do? Or Do you have a job, if so what or what job do you do? Or How do you spend your days?)

30. May I ask how old you are, please? or would you prefer to be offered age ranges from which to choose?

31. **<12, 12-16, 16-18, 18-24, 25-35, 36-40, 40-65, 65+....**

Thank you very much for taking the time to help - it is really appreciated.

Appendix A.8.6: Phase 4 - Significant other questions

Read to respondents

0. **Questions**

a. Sub questions

Participant answers

Directions to self

Prompts

Notes

Name:

Participant name

Ref: B/DM5500

Interview protocol
Significant Other

I am conducting some research into outdoor activities centres. Name has been selected for this interview because they recently visited an outdoor centre.

I have asked them their view point but would now like see if your views agree with their opinions or that you have any additional feedback you may be able to give regarding your personal knowledge of name and their visit.

If you are happy to do this, then I would like to ask you about 20 - 30 questions. This should take about 20 minutes. Please answer each question as fully as possible as I really value hearing your opinions.

Before we start there are a few things I should like to make you aware of:

1. If you would rather not answer a question, then please just say so.
2. You are free to change your mind or withdraw what you say at any time during the interview or immediately afterwards.
3. Your answers and identity are confidential. I will not discuss what you say with the staff at the Centre or your organisation (if applicable) and you will not be named in any written report.

Are you happy to continue?

1. **Who organised the trip, please?**

Was this the individual, part of a family trip, a school, club or other organisation etc?

2. **Did you accompany name to the centre?**

If **"yes"**: go to Q4

If **"no"**: **Did name go with any support ?**

3. If so: **Did this support take the form of personal or group organised support?**

4. If they did accompany: **Did you accompany them on the activities?**

5. **Was this name's first visit to an outdoor centre?**

a. If **"no"**: Which Centres has name visited and roughly how many times? (and over how many years / or how long ago was this)?

6. **How long did name stay?** Most recent visit only

7. **Did name want to go to an outdoor centre?**

a. If so why

b. If a "holiday"": Was it their choice where to go or someone else's?

a. If it was "someone else": Who made this decision?

8. What did name hope to get out of this visit?

Explore each expectation with the following questions

a. Do you think it turned out this way?

b. In what way / how / please expand?

c. Was there anything you are aware of that helped or hindered name to get (expectation) out of the visit?

9. Was there anything else name hoped to get from the visit?

a. Do you think it turned out this way?

b. In what way / how / please expand?

c. Was there anything you are aware of that helped name to get (expectation) out of the visit?

If it was part of an organised trip:

10. What do you think the organiser hoped name / participants would get out of it?

Explore each expectation with the following questions

a. Do you think it turned out this way?

b. In what way / how / please expand?

c. Was there anything you are aware of that helped name / participants to get (expectation) out of the visit?

11. Do you think there was anything else the organiser hoped for from the visit?

a. Do you think it turned out this way?

b. In what way / how / please expand?

c. Was there anything you are aware of that helped the organiser to get (expectation) out of the visit?

12. Was there / did there appear to be anything particularly good about the visit?

13. Was there / did there appear anything particularly bad about the visit?

I am now going to ask you some questions about the activities.

14. What did name do when at the Calvert Trust (name of Centre)?

If inappropriate answer, consider asking which activities they did.

Have available the list of activities offered by each centre on the web site and possibly read the list as a prompt to them.

15. What do you believe name got from doing the activities?

If only "fun" ask if they got anything other than "fun" from the activities.

a. Why do you think this / please expand?

b. Which activities do you think gave name (whatever identified above)?

c. What was it about these particular activities that make you think this?

d. Was there anything that helped with this?

Follow this line of questioning for each attribute gained from the activities.

If "nothing" or similar: Please tell me what you thought about the activities?

16. Do you believe the instructors did anything to help name learn anything (about themselves) from the activities?

a. **If "yes":** Please can you describe what they did?

b. **If "no":** What role did the instructors play?

c. Would you have liked the instructors to have done anything different from what you have just described?

17. Do you think taking part in outdoor activities (this visit) will make any difference to name's life?

a. **If "yes":** Please will you describe what difference it will make?

Ask them to consider longer-term or lasting differences if very short-term benefits are identified.

18. Did you think were any negative outcomes from name taking part?

a. **If "yes":** Please describe what these were?

Identify cause and activity

b. **If "no":** Where there any activities or experiences from the visit that you would not like name to do or have again and why?

c. Do you have any further comments that you would like to make about the activities or name's experiences during or after your visit to (name of Centre)?

Now moving away from the activities

19. Was there anything about being at the Centre, you believe contributed to, or detracted from, what name got out of the visit? (eg being away from home, living with different people or eating different food)

a. **If "yes":** What was this and why?

b. Do you consider there may have been benefits from name doing the activities from home, or staying somewhere else to do the activities? **If so, explore further:** e.g. where would they prefer to stay and why this would be better?

20. Is there anything else you would like to say about name's stay at the centre from either your or name's perspective?

21. (If the answer to Q3 is that they have visited other outdoor Centres): Earlier you said that name had visited other outdoor Centre(s).

a. Can you please compare what name gained or learnt from the experience?

b. Were there differences in the approach offered by the staff at the different centres?

c. Was there anything different about name before during or after their second visit?

d. Did repeating the experience make a difference to what name / participants gained (if anything) from the visit?

If more than one previous visit:

e. Was this repeated with each additional visits, if so, how?

Is there anything else you would wish me to be aware of?

I have finished asking about your experience but may I ask you a few questions about yourself, if you are happy to answer these:

22. What is your relationship with name?

23. How long have you known / worked with name for? If appropriate

24. **What is your Occupation?**

Thank you very much for taking the time to help - it is really appreciated.

Appendix A.8.7: Phase 4 – Sample interview transcription

Read to respondents

0. Questions

a. Sub questions

Participant answers

Directions to self

Prompts

Notes

NAME:	[redacted]
CENTRE:	[redacted]
PD /	II
CON /	ACQ
> 18 /	U 18
Ref:	B/DM550068

Interview protocol
Participants' Experiences
of Outdoor Centres

I am doing some research into outdoor activities centres. You have been selected for this interview because I believe you have recently visited an outdoor centre.

Is this correct? Yes

I would be grateful if you could help by answering some question about your visit. This should take between 30 to 40 minutes.

Are you OK with this? Yes

Please try to answer each question as fully as possible as I would really value hearing your opinions.

Before we start there are a few things I should like to make you aware of:

1. If you would rather not answer a question, then please just say so.
2. You are free to change your mind or withdraw what you say at any point during the interview or immediately afterwards.
3. Your answers and identity are confidential. I will not discuss what you say with the staff at the Centre or anyone you may have gone with, and you will not be named in any written report.

Are you happy to continue? Yes

Both the above and the following questions will act as an ice-breaker, a settler, confirm some of the selection criteria and help gauge the intellectual capability of the respondent. The latter will assist in deciding whether the questions require modification during the interview or identifying whether help in communication is needed.

1. Which outdoor centre did you visit recently?

[redacted]

2. **Roughly how long ago was this?**

   Nov (12)…..

3. **What was the weather like?**

   Wet…..

4. **Who did you go with?**

   Was this with your school, a club, your family or by yourself?

   Myself…..

a. **If "by myself":** Was this with a personal care assistant or buddy?

   …..

5. **Was this your first visit to an outdoor centre?**

a. **If "no":** Which Centres have you visited and roughly how many times (and over how many years / or how long ago was this)?

   [redacted] x 2 – canoeing, walking, football & cricket

   [redacted] x 2…..

6. **How long did you stay (during the most recent visit only)?**

   3 days…..

7. **Did you choose (want) to go to an outdoor centre?**

   Yes…..

a. **If "Yes":** Why was this?

   Go by myself as the first time I didn't, and it was something new and got the chance to meet some of people I went with last year and to catch up, and I got to meet some new people.

   Can you tell me a bit more about why you wanted to go by yourself?

   I wanted to be a bit more independent since I was getting older. I needed to do something myself for once – not other people, especially my mum.

b. **Was the trip part of an organised trip or event, for example part of a (school or other) organised group or was it a holiday / to take part in the activities / or for some other reason?**

   Through school….

c. **If an organised trip:** What was the purpose of the trip?

   Meet other folks….

d. **If a "holiday":** Was it your choice where to go or someone else's?

   ….

e. **If it was "someone else":** Who made this decision?

   ….

8. What did you hope (or expect) to get out of this visit?

Explore each expectation with all or some of the following questions

Go by myself as the first time I didn't, and it was something new

Can you tell me a bit more about why you wanted to go by yourself?

I wanted to be a bit more independent since I was getting older. I needed to do something myself for once – not other people, especially my mum.

Cut and pasted from above as already answered ….

a. **Did it turn out this way?**

N/A….

b. **In what way / how / please expand (if appropriate) ?**

N/A….

c. **Was there anything that helped you to (repeat stated expectation) out of the visit?**

I could talk to older people who I knew and I could have conversations and I felt welcome because I knew them, and the new people were quite welcoming as well….

9. Was there anything else you hoped to get from the visit?

and got the chance to meet some of people I went with last year and to catch up, and I got to meet some new people…..

a. **Did it turn out this way?**

N/A….

b. **In what way / how / please expand (if appropriate)?**

I hadn't seen them face to face and it was remembering what a good time we had the first time we were there, and with the new people I can have a new time talking to different people.

Why was meeting new people important?

It stretched me, and put me out of my comfort zone a bit because I am not very good at making friends sometimes. So it made me want to make new friends because I thought it would be good if I knew new people so I would not have to talk to the same old people all the time. ….

c. **Was there anything that helped you to (repeat stated expectation) out of the visit?**

Already answered….

If it was part of an organised trip:

10. What do you think the organiser hoped you would get out of it?

Explore each expectation with the following questions

A sense of belief in yourself, to push the boundaries and to meet new people and enjoy oneself…..

What do you mean by a sense of belief in yourself?

When I first went I was a bit frightened because I didn't know what to expect when I got there. But the second time I knew I could do it, I knew the surrounding and where I was going. I didn't have to learn a new surrounding again, I knew exactly where I was. This makes it easier to settle down.

Can you talk to me about pushing the boundaries?

The first time I was frightened because some of the activities I was scared about, but after I did, I knew I could do it, and I told myself if you want to do something you CAN do it.

a. Did it turn out this way?

....

b. In what way / how / please expand (if appropriate)?

....

c. Was there anything that helped you to (repeat stated expectation) out of the visit?

The climbing wall and the ropes course were enjoyable and they were a bit of a mini challenge. You challenge yourself to go so far and you can challenge yourself on another. ....

11. Do you think there was anything else the (name of organiser) hoped for?

No....

a. Did it turn out this way?

....

b. In what way / how / please expand (if appropriate)?

....

c. Was there anything that helped the organiser to (repeat stated expectation) out of the visit?

....

12. Was there anything particularly good about your visit?

If poor response try: *What was the best part of your visit*? Or W*hat did you like best during your visit*?

I got a lot of support out of it. The first time I was ill and everyone supported me to go as far as I could. Support from whom? This was support from everyone....

13. Was there anything particularly bad about your visit?

If poor response try: *What was the worst part of your visit*? Or: *Was there anything you did not like? (if so, what?)*

No....

I am now going to ask you some questions about the activities at (name of Centre).

14. What did you do when you were at (name of centre) ?

If inappropriate answer, consider asking which activities they did.
Have available the lists of activities offered by each centre from the web site and consider reading the appropriate list as a prompt to them. Also consider including activities not offered by the Centres to check for "default acquiescence".

Canoeing

Archery

Climbing wall

Velcro Olympics

High Ropes....

15. What did you learn / gain from doing the activities?

If only "fun" ask if they got anything other than "fun" from the activities.

I was capable of doing it and to do stuff and to teach myself lessons like if I want to go somewhere I CAN go somewhere.....

a. In what way / how / please expand?

....

b. Which activities made you (whatever mentioned above)?

The climbing wall

c. What was it about the activities that gave you (the feeling of) (whatever mentioned above)?

because I had never done it before but when I did it and got to the top it gave me a bit of lift which I needed at the time. I kept doing it and it somehow clicked and I kept doing it.

d. Was there anything that especially made (helped) you feel (whatever mentioned above)?

....

Follow this line of questioning for each initial response given / gain from the activities.

e. **If "nothing" or similar:** Please tell me what you thought about the activities?

....

16. Did the instructors help you to learn or gain anything from the activities?

Yes....

a. **If "yes":** Please can you describe what they did?

They showed us about all the safety equipment so that you knew before you started that you weren't going to fall down, so you have got to put trust in them to do it. They told us how to do it properly and they helped me to get to the top, because I could trust them that I was not going to fall down.

They encouraged you saying you can do it.....

b. **If "no":** What role did the instructors play?

....

c. Would you have liked the instructors to have done anything different to that which you have just described?

No....

17. Do you think taking part in outdoor activities will make any difference to your life?

Yes....

a. **If "yes":** Please will you describe what difference it will make?

Because if I went to any other activities I knew I could do it. For instance if I went to a climbing wall I knew I could do it if it was an easy one. It wasn't like I couldn't do it because I know I can do it.

Does that impact on any other part of your life in addition to the activities?

No ….

Ask them to consider longer-term or lasting differences if very short-term benefits are identified.

….

If "no or yes":

….

Is there anything you are (if yes already) using in your life today that you learned on your course?

I learnt that I can go anywhere, so I can transfer that into getting good grades at school. Trying to plan ahead to my future before it starts coming to us quickly.

And you got that from just doing the activities?

Yes ….

18. **Did you think were any negative outcomes (effects) from** (anything bad about) **taking part?**

No….

a. **If "yes":** Please describe what these were?

Identify cause and activity

….

b. Are there any activities that you wouldn't like to repeat (and why)?

….

c. **If "no":** Where there any activities or experiences from the visit that you would not like to repeat (and why)?

(may have misheard the question) I'd like to do archery, canoeing again. And I would definitely like to have another go at the high ropes because I didn't do very well the first time as I was a bit frightened, as I am not very good at heights. I want t try and get round and to build confidence up on heights. ….

19. **Do you have any further comments that you would like to make about the activities at** (name of Centre)**?**

No….

Now moving away from the activities

20. **Was there anything about being in** (name of Centre)**, that added to, or detracted** (took away) **from, what you got out of your visit?**

(eg being away from home, living with different people or eating different food)

….

a. **If "yes":** Please could you describe what added to or took away from your visit?

All the instructors were very nice and they tried to make your visit as best as it could be…..

b. **If "No": go to sub question "20 c".**

c. Would you have preferred to do the activities from home, or have stayed elsewhere for the activities? If so, explore further: e.g. where would you have preferred to stay and why this would be better?

I would rather do it away as you got to meet different people doing them. At home I would just be with my family or my friends and I wouldn't really meet new people. ....

21. Is there anything else you would like to say in general about your stay at (name of centre)?

No....

22. Have you learnt anything about yourself from your visit?

Yes....

a. **If "yes": What was this? (get to expand if needed)**

I have got a belief that I am capable of doing anything I put my mind to. Because of the climbing wall I believed in myself that I could get to the top and when I did, it gave me a lot of boost that when I put my mind to *anything* I can achieve it. ....

b. Has this changed anything you may do in the future, if so what?

Maybe.

23. Have you learnt anything about other people from your visit?

Yes....

a. **If "yes": What was this? (get to expand if needed)**

The people I met they are kind and can comfort you and you can comfort them, and get along with a laugh and a joke.....

b. Has this changed anything you may do in the future, of so what?

Maybe....

24. Have you learnt anything about the outdoor environment from your visit?

Yes....

a. **If "yes": What was this? (get to expand if needed)**

There are different parts of outside that I didn't know about before. I didn't know about canoeing, different watersports, climbing. I used to think outside sheep and cows and that was it. ....

b. Has this changed anything you may do in the future, of so what?

Maybe....

25. (If the answer to Q3 was that they have visited other outdoor Centres): Earlier you said that you had visited other outdoor Centre(s).

a. Can you please compare what you learnt or gained from your visit to (name of other centre) vs. (name of centre in this interview)?

I learnt a bit more on the second visit because I wasn't with the same group and I had to learn to co-operate with them because I hadn't seen them before and I had to help them but help myself in the same way as I was helping them.

b. Were there any differences in the approach between the staff at the different centre(s)?

Same centre….

c. How did you feel about going back to an outdoor activity Centre again? before / during / after?

Ok, excited….

d. Did going back again make a difference to what you gained from your visit this time?

Not really….

If more than one previous visit:

e. Was this true for each additional visits, if so, how?

….

26. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experience of visiting outdoor centres?

It is quite enjoyable because you are learning something different than if you were to go on holiday somewhere else like to museums. You are learning skills that are useful because it means if you have something to do and you know you have the skills to do it its useful because you have it locked away and you know that you can do it and you have learnt a skill that will help you get to where you want to be.

Is there anything from the trip that will directly help you in school?

The climbing wall incident. When I came here (the school) I didn't think I would get much as I was down the bottom set and didn't know much. But when I went to [redacted] to the climbing wall I got a bit of belief that I can do things that I want to do, I just have to push myself.

I have finished asking about your experience but may I ask you a few questions about yourself, if you are happy to answer these:

27. Do you regard yourself as having a disability?

a. **If "yes":** How would you describe your disability?

Complex physical….

28. How long have you had this disability for?

Congenital….

29. What is your Occupation? (What do you do? Or Do you have a job, if so what or what job do you do? Or How do you spend your days?)

Student….

30. May I ask how old you are, please? or would you prefer to be offered age ranges from which to choose?

16….

Thank you very much for taking the time to help - it is really appreciated.